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THE AFRICAN COMMUNIST

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EDITORIAL NOTES

BOTHA'S ANTI-COMMUNIST STRATEGY MUST BE DEFEATED

As part of its campaign to convince its backers that it is a reliable ally in the fight against "communism and terrorism", the Botha regime last June published a 42-page pamphlet entitled "Talking to the ANC" which claims to demonstrate that the ANC is merely a front for the SACP which in turn is a tool of Moscow.

The main purpose of the pamphlet is to make mischief between the ANC and SACP, to set the one against the other, and to show that both organisations are interested only in "violence and terror" and are therefore not fit to enter into negotiations with the Botha regime.

> "All reasonable people would like to see peaceful and negotiated solutions to the problems of our country", says the pamphlet. "The Government has made it clear that it will negotiate only with those South Africans who renounce violence. It has insisted that negotiations must essentially be a process of give and take, aimed at satisfying reasonable demands. At the moment the ANC does not comply with these requirements".

In our view it is the Botha regime which fails the test. By denying the franchise to the majority of the population, it inevitably has to rely on force for its authority to govern, and its exercise of that force becomes more and more violent and brutal the more the people assert their right to self-determination and freedom. And side by side with the use of force goes the resort to lies and slander against its opponents, censorship and the suppression of the truth.

Centrepiece of the pamphlet is a chart purporting to show that 23 of the 30 members of the ANC executive elected at the Kabwe conference last year are members and/or active supporters of the South African Communist Party. We do not propose to go into the numbers game, which totally distorts the nature of the relationship between the ANC and SACP, and to indulge in which is in itself an exercise in anti-communism and a disservice to the cause of unity in the liberation struggle. Suffice to say that the pamphlet reveals that the regime's intelligence is faulty, or that it is lying. The CIA, for example, can only find 18 Communists on the ANC Executive! So much for the "information" gleaned by Craig Williamson and his cronies! Yet on the basis of this sort of disinformation the reader is expected to make a judgment adverse to the ANC.

The pamphlet is a deceitful concoction of lies, half-truths and innuendo calculated to sow division in the ranks of the liberation movement. The old canard is resurrected that the Communist Party has infiltrated the African National Congress in a bid to undermine the leadership and take control. This is precisely the same argument as was advanced by the prosecution in the 1956-61 treason trial and was rejected by Judge Rumpff, who stated in his final judgment:

> "That it was the policy of the African National Congress that Communists and anti-Communists could freely become members of the African National Congress, provided they subscribed to the policy of the African National Congress, and that some responsible Executive leaders of the African National Congress were members of the Communist Party before it was banned in 1950. There is no evidence to support the allegation of the Prosecution that there was infiltration by members of the former Communist Party into the ranks of the African National Congress".

It was a lie in 1961, when Rumpff delivered his verdict of "not guilty". It is a lie today. There is not and never has been any Communist infiltration of the ANC. There are Communists in the ANC, but they carry out their duties on the same basis as any other ANC member, and have no ulterior aims or secret agenda. (See Central Committee statement on page 126.)

In a page devoted to the Rivonia trial the pamphlet claims that "Mandela admitted his guilt". Yet the pamphlet does not even state what Mandela and his colleagues were charged with. Mandela in fact admitted nothing, because he had committed no offence. Far from making any sort of confession, as the pamphlet implies, Mandela proudly declared his support for the ANC's policy of armed struggle and his willingness, if needs be, to die for freedom.

Violence and Terror

The general drift of the pamphlet is that, under the influence of the Communist Party and Moscow, the ANC rejects talks and negotiations and concentrates on "indiscriminate violence" and terror.

> "The onslaught by the ANC is not primarily aimed at the Security Forces . . . but, as in the case of other terrorist organisations . . . at unidentifiable victims, with the aim to scare the population, thereby intimidating them. In this regard, the ANC does not differ at all from the PLO, IRA and the Red Brigade".

There will be no democracy and little room for dissent in an ANC-dominated republic, says the pamphlet, pointing out that the ANC aims to establish a "people's democratic republic" and that "most communist states designate themselves as 'people's democratic republics' ". The pamphlet then goes on to warn the "genuine nationalists" and "liberals" in the ANC that they are playing with fire. Communists might work with them up to the completion of the "first phase" of the revolution, but once the first phase of "national liberation" was completed would turn on their former allies and destroy them, as had happened in Vietnam, Cuba and Nicaragua.

Stating "The ANC sees its 'struggle' as part of a socialist revolution", the pamphlet quotes the ANC publication *ANC Speaks* as follows:

> "The struggle of the oppressed people of South Africa is taking place within an international context of transition to the socialist system, of the breakdown of the colonial system as a result of national liberation and socialist revolution . . .".

The words indicated by dots which the pamphlet does not want to reproduce are "and the fight for social and economic progress by the people of the whole world". Precisely. It is the fight of the oppressed majority of South Africans for economic and social progress,for national liberation, which the Botha regime wants to destroy by resorting to anti-Communism of the crudest type. The pamphlet calls on the world to condemn the ANC because it is anti-imperialist, because it has supported Soviet peace initiatives, because it has opposed the United States in international affairs. It cites the following passage from a speech by President O.R. Tambo as proof of the ANC's wrong-doing:

> "We therefore have an international obligation to be active in the struggle to defeat the counter-offensive that the imperialists, led by the Reagan Administration of the United States, have launched.
>
> "We too must speak out, and have spoken out, against the attempts of the United States to impose its will on the people of the world. This policy has already resulted in the criminal invasion of Grenada, the undeclared war against Nicaragua, and the direct intervention of the United States in El Salvador, in support of a gang of murderers".

If to oppose the US invasion of Grenada must be taken as proof of Communist sympathies, then Margaret Thatcher, too, is a Communist, however much it may distress her and us to say so. But then that is the logic of anit-Communism, as Hitler proved in his day. Anti-Communism is the weapon of extreme reaction, used to subvert democracy and pave the way for fascism. Anti-Communism is the weapon now being wielded by the Botha regime to undermine the ANC, to destroy the unity of nationalist and communist in the ranks of the liberation movement.

Anti-Communism should not be treated lightly by South African freedom fighters. Anti-Communism is the amalgam which unites our enemies, which enables Reagan, Thatcher and Botha to resist sanctions, which protects fascism from exposure and retribution, which is the last-ditch defence of capitalism under threat from the forces of social and economic progress. Anti-Communism takes a variety of forms, the most commonplace of which, though by no means the only one, is anti-Sovietism.

In South Africa today we fight for the widest possible unity of anti-apartheid forces in our bid to bring to an end the racist regime of blood and terror which is blighting the land. But the bed-rock on which the liberation movement is founded is the ANC-SACP-SACTU alliance. It has been tried and tested by history. As that alliance has been consolidated, so the strength and influence of the movement as a whole has grown, its ability to mobilise the masses in action been extended. Nothing must be allowed to endanger that alliance — not the prospect of talks with Botha, nor the offer of help from businessmen, Progressives or any other source if the price demanded is anti-Communism. The enemy of our friend can never be our friend or ally, but must be treated also as our enemy. Anti-Communism has no place in our liberation movement.

THE IMPERIALIST CONSPIRACY ON SANCTIONS

"British and United States intelligence have been exchanging information with their South African counterparts about the activities of the banned and exiled African National Congress throughout the crisis in the apartheid regime, past and present US officials have finally admitted." — *The Guardian*, London, July 24, 1986.

Quoting a report in the *New York Times* of July 23, the paper added: "The exchanges have been systematic and regular." Information is swapped about "political activities, ANC bombing targets and the movement of leaders like Oliver Tambo, in return for South African data on Soviet and Cuban military and political involvements throughout southern Africa".

The *New York Times* report claims that the exchange of information has only taken place in the last decade or so, and that "no data on the ANC had ever been forwarded before 1981". But *The Guardian* adds: "Though the finger points similarly at the Thatcher Government, the *New York Times* account suggests that ministers in the Wilson-Callaghan governments of 1974-79 may have some reminiscing to do, too."

It is our belief that co-operation between the intelligence services of the capitalist countries extends even further back into the past,and probably dates back to the formation of the CIA and MI5 and equivalent agencies of other capitalist countries. We know that South Africa's Suppression of Communism Act No. 44 of 1950 was drafted after discussion between Sir Percy Sillitoe, head of MI5, and the South African government, and we also know that Sillitoe toured a number of Commonwealth countries at the same time to co-ordinate their legislative and administrative measures against "international communism".

It should not come as a shock to progressives that Reagan, Thatcher and their ilk whilst proclaiming their dedication to liberty and their detestation of apartheid, should be co-operating with Botha in tracking down "communists and terrorists". Botha, Reagan and Thatcher have openly declared over and over again that they regard South Africa as a vital bastion of "the West" in the cold war against the Soviet Union and the forces of "international communism and terrorism". In a televised speech on July 22 Reagan pledged his support for Mrs Thatcher's denunciation of punitive sanctions against South Africa as "immoral" and "utterly repugnant". The Botha regime "has a right and responsibility to maintain order in the face of terrorists", said Reagan.

"In southern Africa our national ideals and strategic interests come together", he explained. "Western nations have poured billions in foreign aid and investment loans into southern Africa. Does it make sense to aid these countries with one hand, and with the other to smash the industrial engine upon which their future depends?"

Their future? Whose future? Reagan and Thatcher make great play of their concern for the African masses, and claim they oppose sanctions because the starving Africans will suffer most. But it is clear Reagan and Thatcher are not interested in the African masses. They do not listen to the plea of the African masses that sanctions should be imposed in order to bring apartheid more speedily to an end. They do not heed the warning of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons' Group that the absence of sanctions and Pretoria's belief that they need not be feared defers change. They are not disturbed by the threats of South African Cabinet ministers that they will step up the killing rate if it is considered necessary to bring the African masses to heel.

No, what Reagan and Thatcher are concerned with is the preservation of South Africa as a field for investment and the retention of South Africa as an ally in their global alliance against "communism". The United States, Britain and West Germany between them are responsible for the bulk of foreign trade with and investment in South Africa. They are the principal props of the apartheid regime, the main foreign beneficiaries of the system based on discrimination and exploitation which they claim to want "reformed". The United States in 1980 obtained a 30% return on its investment in South Africa — a higher interest rate than from anywhere else in the world. Thanks to the recent "unrest" and the faltering of the South African economy, that return was reduced to 7% in 1984 and has since probably been turned into a loss. Other foreign investors have had similar experiences.

Understandably, the capitalists, domestic and foreign, want a return to the status quo ante. Botha, Reagan and Thatcher are interested in "reform" only to the extent that it restores the profitability of the system; they are definitely not interested in reforming the system itself. When they protest that the implementation of the Freedom Charter will lead to chaos, they mean they fear for the future of their profits. Their proposals for change are intended to defuse, not to consummate, the national democratic revolution.

That is why Reagan and Thatcher are so reluctant to impose sanctions against South Africa. Far from being concerned about the African masses, it is out of concern for themselves, out of self-interest, that they refuse to take effective action against South Africa. Politically and ideologically they are so bound up with the apartheid state that they regard any injury to South Africa as an injury to themselves. And the stakes are so high that Thatcher, for example, is prepared to risk the break-up of the Commonwealth rather than submit to what she regards as "this emotional clamour for punitive sanctions". When eventually compelled to act, Botha's allies give as little ground as possible.

However, world pressure for the imposition of sanctions is increasing steadily. Thatcher was isolated at the Commonwealth mini-summit last

August, and Reagan is forced to take account of an ever-growing public demand for action. Meanwhile South Africa takes a further step on the road to self-destruction by imposing its own sanctions against the frontline states. Far from bringing them to heel, this and other forms of racist aggression can only intensify their determination to isolate themselves from South Africa and end all forms of dependency on a regime which so openly proclaims itself their enemy.

The racists are on the run, but though driven into a corner, apartheid is not yet dead. Action to end it must be stepped up on all fronts, internal and external. Sanctions, armed struggle and mass action are the three lines of attack on which the liberation movement and its allies must now concentrate so that the enemy can be totally routed and final victory achieved.

40th ANNIVERSARY OF THE PASSIVE RESISTANCE CAMPAIGN

On June 13, 1946, a group of resisters including women from the Transvaal pitched their tents on municipal land in Durban in defiance of the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act. This Act severely restricted the right of Indians to live and trade where they chose, and offered them a truncated form of communal representation in terms of which those Indians who satisfied the qualifications requirements were given the "privilege" of electing three whites to Parliament.

The militant resistance of the Indian people in 1946 signalled a rupture with the policies, strategies and tactics followed by the Indian organisations after the departure of Mahatma Gandhi to India. For decades the Indian organisations had been led mainly by well-to-do merchants who acted on the assumption that if they were conciliatory, moderate and kept aloof from the African and Coloured people, the white minority government would treat them with favour. Throughout the twenties and thirties the Indian organisations were strong on rhetoric but weak on action.

The profound tranformation of the Indian people and their organisations in the revolutionary struggle began in the late thirties with the entry into the struggle of comrades such as Dr G.M. Naicker, Dr Yusuf Dadoo, G. Ponen, H.A. Naidoo, Molvi Cachalia, T.N. Naidoo, M.P. Naicker, B. Peters, M.D. Naidoo, D.A. Seedat and many others. The radicals and progressives fought to give the Indian political movements a mass base and mass character, confronted head-on the incessant racist attacks on the rights of the Indians and linked their struggles with those of the African and Coloured people.

The demographic structure of the Indian population had altered by the late thirties, by which time most Indians in Natal over the age of fifteen had become part of an urban proletariat. The radicals based their policies, strategy and tactics on bringing about the unity in action of the Indian workers, farmers, professionals and traders.

The years 1939-46 were crucial for the entire national liberation and working class movement. During these years the fraternal unity of the two main streams of our revolutionary process were strengthened and deepened. The mass mobilisation of the Indians was given a solid base by the influx of political activists from the working class, amongst them many communists.

In the months preceding the Passive Resistance campaign the radicals organised hundreds of meetings, demonstrations and rallies in the urban and rural areas of Natal and the Transvaal.

Thousands upon thousands of Indians rallied to the call for mass resistance. The mood of the Indian people was reflected in a manifesto of resistance adopted at a special conference called by the Natal Indian Congress (NIC) on 30 March, 1946 to challenge Smuts' Ghetto Bill. The manifesto declared:

> "Workers, businessmen, professionals and farmers, only our united action can save us. Either we perish as a whole, or we resist as a whole. There is no turning back. The time has come for suffering and sacrifice. It is your duty to give your utmost, physically, financially and morally. Any Indian, man or woman, who serves on the advisory Board, accepts the communal franchise, or obstructs the struggle in any way whatsoever, will be guilty of an act of despicable treachery against his family, the community and the principles of democracy. Fellow Indians, forward to united action! Down with the Ghetto Bill!"

"Resistance Day" June 13, 1946 was marked by a countrywide General Strike of Indian workers, farmers, traders and professionals. It signalled the beginning of a mass militant campaign in which the resisters had to contend not only with the forces of "law and order" but also with white hooligans who physically attacked the resisters and destroyed their tents. But these brave men and women remained undaunted. By 1948 over 2,000 resisters, the majority of them workers, had gone to prison, some for more than one term. Amongst those who courted imprisonment were a number of Africans, Coloureds and whites.

The campaign demonstrated that the radicals had the commitment and determination to initiate and sustain a form of action which required sacrifice, discipline and courage. Many young Indian revolutionaries who subsequently played a prominent role in the national liberation and working class movement participated in this campaign. One of them was Ahmed Kathrada, who first went to prison at the age of 17, and is now serving a life sentence after conviction in the Rivonia trial. Thereafter Kathrada had leading positions in the Transvaal Indian Youth Congress, Transvaal Indian Congress, SACP and Umkhonto We Sizwe.

In the course of this campaign of resistance the Dadoo-Xuma-Naicker Pact (1947) was signed. This pact laid the foundation not only for closer co-operation between the Indian Congresses and the ANC but also for the Congress Alliance which so dominated the South African political scene in the fifties. The Passive Resistance campaign also influenced the thinking of the movement's leaders when they were planning the historic Defiance Campaign of 1952.

In the light of the militant actions of the South African Indians and the intransigence of the Smuts government, the newly independent Government of India raised the issue at the United Nations and imposed sanctions on South Africa. These sanctions caused some dislocation and hardship to the economy of India. Ever since, the government of India, fully supported by the people and all political forces in that country, has remained a consistent opponent of racism and apartheid and a firm supporter of the ANC.

Since 1946 the overwhelming majority of South African Indians have resolutely rejected all attempts by the racist regime to buy them off by offering some concessions here and a few crumbs there. Throughout the fifties and sixties the Indian Congress conducted a vigorous struggle against the Group Areas Act and the setting up of dummy institutions like the Indian Council. Over the past three decades a number of Indian heroes and martyrs have emerged, including Billy Nair, Sulaiman "Babla" Saloojee — murdered by the security police in 1964 — and Ahmed Timol, an underground cadre of the SACP, murdered by the security forces in 1972.

Over the past few years the revival of first the NIC and later the TIC has helped to galvanise and mobilise the Indian people in their opposition to racist tyranny. The campaign of the Indian people against Botha's Tricameral Parliament shows that they are determined to fight side-by-side with their fellow oppressed and with democratic whites for a free, non-racial and democratic South Africa. The role of the Indian people is in the front ranks of the national liberation, trade union and working class movement. Many Indians are in the underground structures of the ANC, SACP and SACTU, and within the ranks of our people's army Umkhonto We Sizwe. In the Indian areas they are helping to destroy the apartheid institutions. They are demonstrating in action that there can be no compromise with the Pretoria terrorists. Apartheid cannot be reformed, it must be destroyed.

OUR CHAIRMAN HONOURED

On May 22, by a decree of the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, the chairman of the South African Communist Party, Joe Slovo, was awarded the Order of the Friendship of the Peoples on his 60th birthday.

In a message of fraternal congratulations to Joe Slovo, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union said:

"You have devoted all your life to the struggle for peace and social progress, against imperialism and racism. You have done much to promote the development of the communist and national liberation movements in South Africa, dissemination of Marxist-Leninist ideas on the African continent.

"The communists and working people of the Soviet Union appreciate your contribution to the consolidation of fraternal links between the South African Communist Party and the CPSU, friendship and solidarity between the peoples of our countries".

SACP ONE OF THE GREAT PILLARS OF OUR REVOLUTION

The following speech was delivered by JOE SLOVO, chairman of the South African Communist Party, at a meeting in London on July 30, 1986, held to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the foundation of the Party at a conference in Cape Town in 1921:

When South African communists met in Cape Town 65 years ago they planted the first seed in our continent of Africa of a class party of the working people guided by Marxism-Leninism.

The founding congress of the African National Congress had already taken place in Bloemfontein nine years earlier than ours. It brought into existence the first modern national liberation movement in Africa. Over the years the mood and thinking of this representative of the most nationally oppressed and degraded section of our people has exercised a considerable influence on the mood and thinking of our Party.

Thus, class exploitation and national oppression — the two most salient and interdependent realities of South Africa's socio-economic structure — became the sources of two complementary streams of revolutionary consciousness and revolutionary organisation. In our conditions these streams constitute the main tributaries which swell the river of struggle, accelerating its flow towards a meaningful victory.

Our anniversary happens to occur in a year punctuated with important jubilees which, in combination, form a mosaic of a large slab of a people's history of South Africa.

The 200th anniversary of the birth of King Moshoeshoe in 1786 and the 80th anniversary of the crushing of the Bambatha Rebellion in 1906 highlight two patriots who form part of the pantheon of heroes who led the unending struggle by the indigenous people against the foreign conquest.

The 40th anniversary of the 1946 passive resistance campaign and the 25th anniversary of the formation of Umkhonto we Sizwe in 1961 symbolise both the divide and the continuity of the phase of militant mass non-armed defiance and the inevitable evolvement of a strategy in which organised, revolutionary violence became an essential ingredient of the political struggle.

The 10th anniversary of the Soweto Uprising in 1976 reminds us of the emergence of organised youth — the young lions — as one of the major social forces in the revolutionary line-up.

The 30th anniversary of the famous women's march on Pretoria in 1956 emphasises the indispensable role of those who carry the unique burden of triple levels of exploitation, as workers, as black workers and as black women workers.

The 1946 black miners' strike, whose 40th anniversary is being commemorated this year, has been described by Toussaint as a 'distant clap of thunder' which told South Africa that storms of a new kind lay ahead. It signalled a new beginning to the rise of organised black workers' power which has come into its own as part of the people's offensive. And our Party's 65th anniversary underlines the fundamental link between mass revolutionary trade unions and the long-term political aspirations of our working people towards a society free of exploitation.

Thus, these 1986 anniversaries symbolise the traditions of early resistance, the changing strategies of our struggle and the main social forces in the revolutionary camp — the workers and the organised youth and women.

New Forces of Change

When our Party was born, the back of the centuries-old tribal armed resistance to the foreign conquest had only recently been broken. The new forces of change — especially the black working class — were not yet fully developed. Today, 65 years later, the years of growth and struggle have moulded a working class which is the main pivot of the social forces moving inexorably towards the overthrow of the tyranny.

Anniversaries are notorious as occasions for self-adulation. They tend to encourage uncritical appraisals of the role played during the lifespan being celebrated. I don't want to present the history of our Party as an uninterrupted chronicle of unerring political interventions. We are a product of history and, mistakes apart, the varied phases of our growth reflect also the objective limitations imposed by the different phases of South Africa's socio-economic development. It took some time for us to shed the baggage of our origins in the white labour movement with which we began our journey in 1921. Like many Communist Parties, we also experienced moments when the dead hand of bureaucratic elitism, and a less than perfect application of Leninist principles, led to a few serious departures from internal democratic norms. It was to take some years for the strategic implications of the relationship between class and national struggle to be more adequately synthesised as, we believe, was achieved by our 5th Congress meeting in Johannesburg in underground conditions in 1962.

A constructively-frank examination of certain phases in our growth and development (discussed in books by the Simons', Bunting and Harmel) would undoubtedly uncover a few more self-critical insights. But, on this occasion, let me not overdo the *meae culpae* either. For it is abundantly clear that the main thrust of our role and contribution over the 65 years has carved out for our Party an honoured position, not only as an independent representative of the class aspirations of our working people, but also as an indispensable constituent of the broad liberation front.

Pioneer of Non-racialism

It is not out of place on an occasion such as this to remind ourselves that certain positions which are now regarded as commonplace in both the working class and national movement were pioneered and fought for by our Party. For many decades after our foundation we stood alone as a non-racial political party embracing every section of our people. The very concept of majority rule was propagated first by our Party. This was in 1929 (under the slogan of a Black Republic) at a time when authority regarded the mere mention of voting rights for blacks as the worst treason and when the national movement itself had not yet reached out for this objective. From the middle of the Twenties to the late Sixties communists stood virtually alone in the endeavour to build a trade union movement as an instrument of economic struggle and as a key sector of the mass revolutionary alliance. And, in a country in which raw nationalism is a natural response to unending racist barbarities, it has been our Party which first raised the perspectives of internationalism which linked the mass democratic struggle with movements in all parts of the world working for democracy and for national and social emancipation. And we can claim the dubious honour of being the first political organisation to be driven underground in 1950, two years after the present regime came to power.

But perhaps one of our most signal achievements in the 65 years of our existence has been a truly indigenous elaboration of the theory of the South African revolution. This theory has increasingly informed revolutionary understanding in the ranks of the broader working class and national movement. It has also helped sharpen revolutionary practice. Traditionally, imperialist teaching tends to place Africa outside history until it is 'discovered' by outsiders. We in South Africa were, in that sense, certainly not discovered. We had to discover ourselves. We had to find a South African path.

The search for a path which leads to revolutionary understanding does not end with a religious vision, illuminating eternal truths. It is a process which is never completed because our starting point, the theory of Marxism-Leninism, is a tool and not a mathematical formula. It belongs to no one people. It is as much native to Africa as to every other continent. And if this tool is to do its job properly, it has to be shaped and moulded to the objective conditions of struggle which, in turn, are continually on the move.

Lenin, in his famous address to the young communists of the University of the Peoples of the East, said: 'There is no communist book in which you will find all the answers to your problems'. He did not mean that Marxism contains no universal framework. He was insisting that its specific application has to be unendingly elaborated by revolutionaries who combine a grasp of its essence with a profound study of their own concrete situation and their struggle experiences. If, today, the South African Communist Party can look back with pride at its contribution to the struggle, it is precisely because its history, with all its ups and downs, is a reflection of this process. It is a process which did not unfold in a vacuum, and, more especially, it is one which cannot be separated from the emergence and growth of the African National Congress and the relationship which developed between the communist and national movements.

What explains the special intensity with which the relationship between our two organisations is now being savaged by Botha and his friends? It is partly because even the most pig-headed of our opponents have begun to realise that, sooner or later, they will have to reckon with the ANC which, in the eyes of the greater part of the black population, has little, if any, competition as the alternative power in our land. Since there is no way in which the ANC can be put aside, the only remaining option is to divide it, to change it from within and to blunt the edge of its revolutionary nationalism. The device used is as old as the comic book itself: a crude projection of foreign-controlled 'reds' (some of them naturally colonels in the KGB!) manipulating so-called nationalists. And in their book, of course, a true nationalist is someone who, even when faced with a gun, never gives up his begging bowl; one who is ever-ready to provide a docile black face as a front for maintaining the kind of Western interests and values which have for so long ravaged our continent.

Since our Party, and more particularly its relationship with the ANC, has become the spectre which, more and more, appears to haunt our ruling class and its external allies, a few words about this relationship are appropriate.

No Secret Clauses

The alliance between the Communist Party and the ANC has no secret clauses. Only those who have other axes to grind or who are victims of the stereotype image of Communists and Communist Parties, see in this relationship a sinister white-anting process. It is precisely because it has always been based on a complete respect for the independence and integrity of the internal democratic processes of both organisations, that the alliance has continued to flourish despite unending onslaughts against it from many quarters.

A speculative numbers game is now being played, whose objective is to spot the communists in the National Executive Committee of the ANC. It is instructive to note that inside the country exactly the same game is being played by the regime, but this time in relation to the ANC allegedly using mass organisations such as the UDF and Cosatu as a front. This is clearly directed against these mass organisations just as the communist bogey is exploited in an attempt to weaken the major force of our liberation alliance — the ANC. Ominous inferences are invited because of our refusal to join in this game of which the late Senator Joe McCarthy was such a staunch apostle.

Those who know something of our history will also know that co-operation between the ANC and the SACP began long before they were both driven underground. During the days of legality neither communists who were also active in the ANC nor ANC members who were active in the CP, had reason to hide their political identities. Subsequent demands of clandestinity closed this chapter on open membership inside the country both for the Party and the ANC; an approach which, for obvious reasons, has been adopted by all illegal movements, communists or otherwise.

Unlike the ANC, our Party has no external diplomatic presence requiring an exposure of a collective leadership face which, in our case, would undoubtedly become a main target of the enemy's extended murderous arm.

But, at the end of the day, it is not our anonymity which they fear but rather our publicly-proclaimed policy positions on the main content of our struggle, the forces which need to be gathered to bring it to fruition, and the beacons we have illuminated of a South Africa which is liberated in the true meaning of the term. This is their real nightmare with the graphics provided by the workers and youth who are defiantly unfurling the Party's red flag next to that of the ANC in most of the centres of conflict, thereby expressing their approval of the alliance and the policies which underpin it.

In general, capitalist exploitation and race domination are not symbiotically linked. But the historically-evolved connection between capitalist exploitation and racist domination in South Africa creates a natural link between national liberation and social emancipation; a link which it is virtually too late to unravel. An increasing awareness of this link by more and more of our working people is evidenced by the growing popularity of our Party. It was also dramatically emphasised in a recent poll (reported in the *Financial Mail* 20.9.85) in which 77% of urban blacks expressed themselves in favour of socialism.

Ending Economic Domination

In South African conditions you don't have to be a doctrinaire Marxist-Leninist to believe that a liberation which deals only with a rearrangement of the voting system and leaves undisturbed the white race monopoly of 99% of our major productive resources, is no liberation at all. All you have to be is an honest black nationalist to understand that political domination has been the device to protect economic privilege and domination. This perhaps explains why, in our conditions, it has been such a short hop from black nationalism to communism for some of the greatest figures in our national movement, among them revolutionary giants like Nzula, Nkosi, Marks, Kotane, Mabhida and Dadoo.

We believe that the kind of victory to be aimed for in the coming struggles must provide a launching-pad for the creation of conditions which will make it possible to work for a socialist future. But this is a process which is too often over-simplified by the rhetorical flamboyance of a number of our critics on the far left who want to take us back to the days when our Party's simplistic sloganising of 'class against class' kept it in splendid isolation from the national movement and the black working population.

The main thrust and content of the immediate struggle continues to revolve around the Freedom Charter which provides a minimum platform of a non-racial, united democratic South Africa based on the rule of the majority. Implicit in such a democratic victory will be the immediate need to begin directing the economy in the interests of the people as a whole. This must obviously involve immediate state measures on the land question and against the giant monopoly complexes which dominate mining, banking and industry. As things stand we have the astonishing position of four companies (Anglo American, Sanlam, SA Mutual and Rembrandt) between them controlling 80% of the companies quoted on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

Partial measures to redistribute wealth — a step which even the Anglo American tycoon Gavin Relly thinks might be necessary, albeit in a truncated form — do not in themselves point to a socialist direction. In expressing support for the Freedom Charter our 1962 Programme states that it is not a programme for socialism but rather a 'common programme for a free, democratic South Africa, agreed on by socialists and non-socialists'. At the same time, the Programme insists, the Freedom Charter will also provide a basis for an advance to a socialist future. In practice, the question as to which road South Africa will begin to take on the morning after the liberation flag is raised over Union Buildings, will be decided by the actual correlation of class forces which have come to power.

But we are not there yet, and the most important task facing us all — communists and non-communists — is to complete this part of the journey. Today, that road certainly looks shorter. But, for all that, its complexities have multiplied. A brief look at some of these complexities will show that at least on the surface there are some ingredients which stand in contradiction with one another.

Broad United Front

It is imperative to create the broadest possible front of struggle against the racist autocracy. And a front, by definition, contains disparate forces. The

ANC-led liberation alliance, representing the main revolutionary forces, is clearly the key sector of this front. But, particularly in the recent period, the crisis has thrown up a variety of other groupings (including recent defectors from the white laager) which favour a far-reaching shift away from apartheid, but which do not necessarily share the ANC's more radical objectives. Although these *forces for change* are not part of the *revolutionary forces,* they obviously contribute to the weakening of the main enemy and some of them are clearly part of the opposition line-up.

At the same time there must be no ambiguity about the primary place which the ANC occupies in this line-up and, broadly speaking, the immediate future can only be positively determined under its umbrella. **We therefore reject the oft-repeated claim by Botha and some of his Western allies that, in relation to those who represent black aspirations, the ANC is merely one among equals.** This is a device designed to weaken the main propellant of the coming transformation so as to ensure that a form of power sharing will be apportioned in a way which will not lead to a real loss of control by those who wield it at the moment.

Even within the narrower confines of what could be described as the main revolutionary force, we should not overlook the fact that it represents an alliance of different classes and strata (overwhelmingly black) which suffer varying degrees of national oppression and economic exploitation. And although they may all subscribe to the slogan of People's Power, they cannot be expected to share exactly the same vision about its content and the future.

The slogan of People's Power must therefore be accompanied by an awareness that we are not dealing with an undifferentiated black mass. The most consistent guarantor of genuine liberation is the black working class, which has the smallest stake in the status quo and the least motivation for substituting black faces for white ones in the seats of exploitation. **It is for this reason that both the ANC and the Party emphasise the dominant role of the working people in the coalition of class forces which constitute the liberation front.**

But unlike the ANC, which does not and should not commit itself exclusively to the aspirations of a single class, the Party owes allegiance solely to the working people. And it is our prime function both as an independent Party and as part of the alliance to assert and jealously safeguard the dominant role of this class whose aspirations we represent. In our book this does not imply that the Party itself must seek to occupy the dominant position in the liberation alliance. On the contrary, if correct leadership of the democratic revolution requires the strengthening of the national movement as the major and leading mass organisational force, then this is precisely the way in which a party exercises its vanguard role in the real and not the vulgar sense of the term.

It should also be stressed that the participation of workers (whether communist or non-communist) in the national movement itself and the role played by an independent radical trade union movement like Cosatu are very much part of the process of asserting the role of the workers. But we reject the organisational populism of those who see the shop floor as the only terrain of class struggle and who counterpose the Party and the trade union movement as competitive organs for the political leadership of the working class. We are at one with Jay Naidoo, General Secretary of Cosatu, when he said: 'Organised workers (in the trade union movement) are not representatives of the working class as a whole, but they consititute its most powerful weapon', (*South African Labour Bulletin,* April 1986, p39). The representative of the working class as a whole is a political vanguard which we claim to be; a title which is of course earned by the calibre of leadership on the ground and not by mere proclamation.

Stages of Revolution

A question which is intimately connected with all this is the hardy perennial — the so-called 'two stage theory' of the South African revolution. Our detractors claim that our preoccupation with the national democratic objectives of the immediate anti-racist struggle has led to an abandonment of socialist objectives. We are alleged to believe that in the interests of the popular alliance, the working class should not assert its primacy and should forget all about socialist perspectives until apartheid has been overthrown; a scenario which would leave the way open for the revolution to be hijacked by exploiters with black faces who will ensure that it is stopped in its tracks.

It seems to be the unfortunate fate of a party such as ours (to which, I suppose, by now we should have become accustomed) to be at one and the same time accused by the Bothas of taking over the ANC in order to drive it towards communism, and, by other critics, of being taken over by the ANC which is driving us towards nationalism.

Revolution is a continuing process. Although it inevitably goes through strategic and tactical phases, there is no Chinese wall between them; the ingredients of the later phase must already have begun to mature in the womb of the earlier. This is our approach to the relationship between the national democratic and socialist objectives of our revolution. I have already touched on the dominant role of the workers in the present alliance of class forces and on our continued devotion to the spread of socialist perspectives and more particularly an understanding of the ultimate link between national liberation and social emancipation. **But this does not imply that the motor of the immediate struggle can be effectively fuelled by the slogan of a socialist republic. The emphasis on the struggle for a democratic transformation along the lines of the Freedom Charter is deeply rooted in present reality.**

The speed of recent events has made it more urgent to address a number of issues connected with this democratic transformation which are arousing public discussion. I want to touch briefly on a few of these issues.

Future of Minorities

The fate of the minorities (by which is really meant the white minority) looms larger than ever in the pronouncements of those who for so long had been impervious to the fate of the majority. Our policy and, more importantly, our practice, has been consistent with the opening words of the Freedom Charter that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it — black and white'. We believe that this can only be assured in one united South Africa based on the will of the majority. This is our irreversible starting point.

Equality must be between individuals (if need be, safeguarded by a constitutional mechanism) and not between race or ethnic groups as such. Ethnic parity is a recipe for ethnic domination. The concept of group identity based on race (which trades under various names such as federalism, consociation, etc) is an apartheid formula for the perpetuation of race and ethnic exclusiveness.

The emphasis on the single source of sovereignty based on the will of the majority democratically expressed, is not in conflict with the delegation of certain powers to regional authorities. This occurs in every unitary state. The emphasis on one united democratic South Africa is certainly no threat to the historically-evolved cultural and linguistic heritage of the various groupings which constitute the South African nation in the making.

Unity does not exclude diversity. The regime has used tribal ethnicity and even Afrikaner-English differences to make a ladder of ascendancy over a divided people. The founding-fathers of the ANC in 1912 declared that its primary task would be the creation of a common African consciousness. This process, which has already come a long way, can only be completed in a united democratic South Africa. Such a South Africa will, at the same time, be enriched by all that is healthy in the cultural and linguistic heritage of the different groupings, including that part of the Afrikaners' heritage which is not rooted in racism.

Private and Social Property

Among the projections being debated in the economic sphere, is the relation between private and social property in the phase immediately following majority rule. How do we reconcile two imperatives: the need to begin bringing about changes in the relations of production in the direction of economic egalitarianism, and the need to meet the people's economic requirements and expectations? We believe that, in the long term, there is harmony between these two imperatives; indeed the one is a necessary condition for the other. But enough experiences have been accumulated of disastrous great leaps forward to teach us to be wary of baking slogans rather than bread during the transition phase.

Let me be explicit. For some while after apartheid falls there will undoubtedly be a mixed economy, implying a role for levels of non-monopoly private enterprise represented not only by the small racially oppressed black business sector but also by managers and business people of goodwill who have or are prepared to shed racism. It can only be an indigenous representative of the disastrous Pol Pot philosophy who can project a pole-vault into socialism and communism the day after the overthrow of white rule. If the political domination of the old ruling class is ended and the new state apparatus is constructed within the framework envisaged by the Freedom Charter, the existence of a mixed economy 'controlled' in the words of the Charter 'to assist the well-being of the people', will facilitate rather than hinder the continuing drive towards a socialist future; a drive which, within a truly democratic framework, could well be settled in debate rather than on the streets.

Need for Armed Struggle

In the meanwhile, mass political struggle coupled with an intensification of revolutionary violence remains the imperative. We have never relished the path of violence. But it is plain for all honest observers to see how tightly closed have been all other avenues for meaningful change. Howe's empty-handed retreat from Pretoria has underscored how tightly these avenues continue to be closed. And let me emphasise this: if a real possibility emerges of moving towards the total abolition of apartheid, without escalating violence, there is no sector of our liberation alliance which would reject such a path or refuse to talk to people of goodwill about how to get there.

In present circumstances to expect of the ANC-led liberation alliance to unilaterally abandon violence is to ask it to abandon the people's aspirations. The absence of violence is dependent on the presence of

democracy. In any case, it is difficult to think of an example in history of a movement going to the negotiating table having abandoned the very tactic which has played such an important role in getting the enemy to sit around it.

It is the ANC and its allies who have faith in the democratic process and not Botha. It is we who want a political framework in which the will of the majority can express itself through normal democratic procedures. It is Botha who bans political opposition, keeps the people's leaders in jail and threatens bigger and better massacres and emergencies to prevent the attainment of democracy which he clearly equates with a form of national suicide. And it is apartheid's Western allies who are increasing the prospects of massive blood-letting by standing in the way of effective action by the international community.

Will Sanctions Succeed?

The argument is advanced that a wounded economy will be an obstacle to peaceful reform of the system; a process which they claim will be more assured in conditions of economic stability and growth.

If anything, our experience of the last twenty years proves the exact opposite. South Africa's most dramatic period of economic advance between 1967 and 1976 was also a period during which more was done than at any other time in our history to implement the worst features of apartheid and a period when the mounting repression reached its climax in the 1976 Soweto Uprising. Conversely, it has been during the last ten years of the most severe and long-lasting recession in South Africa's history that the regime has been constrained to move away from at least some of the fringes of apartheid.

There can be little doubt that the catalyst for this has been mounting internal action and increasing external isolation, and has nothing at all to do with the economic arguments advanced. Indeed, these economic arguments are really moving in a bizarre direction; from the same political stable which prophesised that punitive sanctions would lead to a state of chaos which would hold back reforms, we now hear that sanctions ought to be opposed because they will strengthen the economy by forcing self-sufficiency on Pretoria.

In the further alternative, we are also told by those who constructively engage on the side of the regime, that their opposition to real sanctions is motivated by a desire to avoid inflicting suffering on the very blacks whom they wish to help. As we know, the objects of their so-called concern are overwhelmingly in favour of sanctions and, in any case, are heartily sick of being told, yet again, what is good for them by those unable to shed an imperial mentality. Can there be any doubt that the people whom Reagan and Thatcher would really like to help are the Bothas? Their stance has nothing whatsoever to do with the balance of suffering, but everything to do with the balance of profit.

Soviet Influence

These, then, are the self-proclaimed champions of 'human rights'. They never stop whining about Soviet Influence in our struggle.

Let me emphasise (however much it might stick in their gullets) that we in South Africa share the experience of virtually every other liberation movement in the world, of the most consistent and generous support from the Soviet Union and the other socialist nations. Today our cause is becoming more fashionable and we are gratefully gathering more friends. But neither we nor our people will forget or allow themselves to be separated from those who have been consistently with them from the very beginning. This includes our African brothers who have sacrificed so much in support of our struggle.

And among those who also always stood in the front line of support for our cause, were our comrades in the communist and workers' parties in all parts of the world, more especially those who are today sharing our platform.

The Crisis Matures

The unninterrupted upsurge, which can be dated from August 1984, is not a passing phenomenon. It undoubtedly holds out the promise of some really basic transformation. The interrelated economic and political crisis of South Africa's ruling class is not diminishing; in important areas it daily grows more acute. And the factors which usually combine to set the scene for a revolutionary advance are beginning to come together.

Firstly, the ruling class has virtually conceded that it can no longer rule in the old way. The divisions within the power bloc are deepening, as racist politicians and white businessmen thrash about in a desperate search for a way to share power without giving up control.

Secondly, it is crystal clear that the people are no longer prepared to be ruled in the old way. By their action they have already rendered ungovernable most of the urban levels of administration and replaced these with embryos of popular power. Botha's nine-day wonder, the Tri-cameral parliament, has sunk into virtual oblivion. Even more important, growing numbers of our workers and youth are showing a readiness to sacrifice even their lives in the struggle for an end to racist tyranny.

Thirdly, the ANC and the liberation front which it heads, is regarded by friend and foe alike as the vanguard which occupies first place in the allegiance of the overwhelming majority of the mass of the oppressed.

In addition, the massive build-up of international revulsion against Botha's Hitlerian tyranny is reaching one of its highest points. It has its roots in the heroism and rising intensity of our people's resistance. In this day and age there is no struggle which can be separated from the international context, but in the case of South Africa the international factor plays a unique role; because the evil of apartheid, like no other issue, cuts across the world ideological divide. **The international isolation of South Africa can therefore make a special contribution towards a less painful and speedier outcome.**

We do not discount the enemy's virtually irreversible trench mentality which Botha once again exposed in his response to the EPG and now to Howe's useless effort. Nor should we underestimate the internal and external resources which the regime can still muster in an attempt to keep the majority from opening the gates of political power. But, at the same time, the possibility of a people's breakthrough is growing stronger by the day. It follows, therefore, that while continuing to focus our sights on a protracted conflict we must also prepare and be ready to adjust them to a much swifter transformation involving insurrectionary ingredients.

Comrade Chairman, looking back on our 65 years we can be proud of the impact our Party has made. But this impact has not been just as a stimulant for the elaboration of theoretical perspectives for the South African revolution.

Our Party and individual communists have won their political place by dedication and sacrifice to the revolutionary cause in the actual arena of struggle. There is no phase of our struggle which does not have its communist heroes and martyrs; revolutionaries who watered the tree of freedom with their very blood. Today on our 65th Anniversary we dip our red bannner for these communists and other revolutionaries who gave their all in the cause of freedom, in the cause of socialism.

Today, on the 65th Anniversary of our Party — described by Oliver Tambo as one of the great pillars of our struggle — the South African masses are on the move as never before in our history. We pledge and vow to help finish the job.

ANC WILL NEVER FOREGO ITS ALLIANCE WITH THE SACP

by Alfred Nzo
Secretary General of the African National Congress

Message of the National Executive of the African National Congress to the meeting convened to commemorate the 65th anniversary of the South African Communist Party, London, July 30, 1986

It gives us great pleasure to convey to this meeting the fraternal greetings of the National Executive Committee and the entire membership of the African National Congress. On this day we congratulate the Central Committee and all the members of the South African Communist Party and salute them for the sterling contribution they and their Party have made during six and a half decades to the common struggle for the national and social emancipation of our people.

The anniversary of your Party is taking place at a time when events of great historical significance and importance are taking place in our country, South Africa. Breaking through the stifling barrier of illegality imposed on them by the fascist apartheid regime, both the ANC and the SACP are emerging as defiant standard-bearers marching at the head of the militant formations of the democratic movement engulfing the length and breadth of South Africa. The banners of our two organisations constantly flutter defiantly at the head of the revolutionary columns proclaiming the imminent demise of the hated and dying apartheid system.

The struggle in South Africa continues to mount. The general crisis confronting the apartheid system is deepening without stop. The day of liberation draws ever closer. And yet, comrades, exactly because the common enemy realises that our victory is in sight, the period ahead of us will be one of the most intense conflict between the forces of progress and of reaction, a conflict which will be very costly in terms of human lives.

During the testing times in front of us we are certain that the experience and maturity which the South African Communist Party has accumulated and achieved over the period of its existence will stand our broad movement for national liberation in good stead. Constituting an important component part of that movement, the SACP is called upon further to heighten its contribution to the common cause as we march side by side towards the destruction of the apartheid system of white minority rule.

Comrades, the imperialist domination of our country has produced one of the most abhorrent social systems ever known to mankind. It is no accident that apartheid has, like Nazism, been solemnly categorised and denounced as a crime against humanity. To this system, as to Nazism, belongs the theory and practice of the denial of the very humanity of an entire people resulting in the veritable daily commission of the crime of genocide against our people.

The struggle inside and outside South Africa to destroy this system has drawn into action literally hundreds of millions of people of all races and nationalities, of different classes and peoples, of various ages and ideological, political and religious persuasions. The African National Congress is proud of the contribution it has made to the achievement of this truly remarkable united front against racism and apartheid, both at home and abroad.

Backward Elements

Outside the ranks of this front are to be found some of the most backward elements in world politics, including racists of varying hues, neo-nazis and those who seek world imperialist hegemony. As we get nearer to our goal, so do these forces, including of course the Botha regime itself, work more feverishly to undermine and break this unity down, to immobilise as many anti-racist forces as possible; to reduce the international isolation of the apartheid regime and to weaken our movement by dividing and severing its links especially with the Soviet Union and other Socialist countries.

As did its Nazi progenitor, the Pretoria regime, supported and echoed by its allies, relies on the use of anti-communism as its principal ideological weapon. The focus of attack of those who seek to keep us in servitude is today centred on the role and position of the SACP in the South African struggle, the extent and depth of the influence of communists within the ANC to the point of questioning the independence of the African National Congress, the veracity of our own leadership and the honesty of our publicly-declared intentions, policy and programme.

This counter-offensive has gone so far that detailed studies are published which purport to identify the ideological positions of each one of the members of our National Executive Committee. Each one of us, members of the leadership of the ANC, find ourselves confronted insistently and with great persistence with the task of having to explain whether we are or are not members of the Communist Party.

Many a South African democrat was faced with the question as the decade of the Fifties began. In terms of the Suppression of Communism Act, people were asked to pronounce themselves as opponents of communism or face the consequences of being banned and prohibited from being quoted by the mass media. It was surely no accident, and is instructive in terms of what is happening today, that these developments in South Africa occurred when McCarthyism in the United States, and the Cold War globally, had reached great heights — all of them fuelled by an hysterical and maniacal anti-communism.

As the Suppression of Communism Act was passed in 1950, the memory of Nazi tyranny was still fresh in the minds of our people. When they were asked to purchase a circumscribed freedom by denouncing communism, all true South African democrats refused. They refused because they remembered that the denunciation, persecution and murder of communists would be but a prelude to the suppression of our entire democratic movement. Today we have once again returned to that position.

There are members of our National Executive Committee who have been singled out for assassination. According to the plans of the enemy, it will be said that these have been killed by anti-communist nationalists within the ranks of our movement.

Campaign of Terror

The hope which the forces of reaction entertains is that if they can sell this story, they can then persuade the bulk of humanity to accept as legitimate an intensified campaign of terror directed against the national liberation movement of our country. The most recent statement by the President of the United States, Ronald Reagan, serves exactly as encouragement to the Botha regime to go all out to try to smash the African National Congress.

As we know, the US special services and those of Britain and of other imperialist countries, including Zionist Israel, are supplying the Pretoria regime with the information it needs in order to carry out well-planned and precise murder operations. With this scenario as a background, the Botha regime is offering an 'olive branch' to those within the ranks of the African National Congress it characterises as moderate nationalists, asking them to return to South Africa to participate in the constitutional evolutionary process aimed at the solution to the South African problem on its own terms.

Needless to repeat here that these reactionary and divisive manoeuvres will not succeed. The African National Congress is solidly united, as was graphically demonstrated by the Second National Consultative Conference held last year in Zambia. **It shall not at any time be persuaded to forego its alliance with the South African Communist Party, as the history of our struggle has unmistakably demonstrated that it is the unbreakable unity of all the democratic and progressive forces that will successfully mobilise and rally all sections of the oppressed masses of our people to speedily destroy the hated apartheid system.** It is appropriate to recall here the statement of our President, Comrade OR Tambo, who said, on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary of the South African Communist Party, when referring to its alliance with the ANC, that 'ours is not merely a paper alliance, created at conference tables and formalised through the signing of documents and representing only an agreement of leaders. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle'.

Anti-imperialist Movement

The African National Congress is a committed detachment of the international anti-imperialist movement. Were it to rise again as it did in 1936, we would defend the Spanish Republic. Were it to break out again, we would support the struggle of the Vietnamese people against US aggression. Today, we must defend the Palestinian people as we do those of Namibia, Nicaragua, El Salvador, East Timor, Afghanistan, Mozambique and Angola. We must denounce the invasion of Grenada as we must condemn the attacks against Libya, and even more vehemently condemn the imperialist-supported South African aggression against the front line African states. National self-determination and independence, the right of every people to freedom, equality among the people — all require that we must condemn all attempts to limit that freedom. Humanity has the right to peace and life. This right must be defended by all who oppose the bellicose policies of international imperialism, first and foremost American imperialism.

Comrades, the African National Congress will continue to defend the right of any South African who so chooses to belong to the South African Communist Party. So shall we respect the right of any of our compatriots to belong to any party of their choice as long as that party is not a vehicle for the propagation of racism and fascism. Our democratic perspectives impose these obligations on us.

Faced as we are by a common enemy, so shall we also continue to maintain our relations with the SACP and all political and other formations that genuinely strive for an end to the apartheid system and the victory of the struggle for a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa. To take any other position would be to condemn to failure the very struggle which the ANC is waging for the realisation of these objectives.

Indeed, comrades, we shall continue to work to activate all national groups and social forces in our country to be involved in the struggle to destroy the apartheid system. We want the working class to be involved in this struggle as a leading force while we also seek to ensure that the capitalists, as well, act against the apartheid regime of national oppression. Religious people and atheists must join hands against the common enemy. By their participation in the struggle, all these forces place themselves in a position to participate also in determining the future of our country.

What we have said strikes terror into the hearts of those who are opposed to our liberation, including some who proudly proclaim themselves as democrats. The fact of the matter is that imperialism is opposed to a democratic order in South Africa. Imperialism is afraid of democracy because it is unwilling that the people of our country should, in their entirety, determine their destiny. It seeks to ensure that its local representative in Southern Africa — the Botha regime — should continue to rule the roost, in its own name and in the interests of international reaction.

It is obvious enough that to achieve this objective our adversaries must work to destroy the ANC, its allies and the democratic movement as a whole. The recent disclosures that the US and British intelligence services have been passing information about the ANC to their South African counterparts does not come as a surprise. The fact of the alliance against democracy in South Africa demands that this and other forms of co-operation must exist between the fascist regime in Pretoria and the right wing establishment in the Western countries whatever its democratic pretensions.

Fifty years ago it took mass popular pressure to compel the ruling group in this country to break its relationship with the Hitlerites. Churchill, Roosevelt and De Gaulle emerged as giants because they stood on the shoulders of millions of ordinary Britons, Americans and French people who would not appease Nazism. Today, the peoples of these countries and others, such as the FRG and Japan, are called upon once more to break the immoral alliance which their governments have formed with the offspring of Nazism in South Africa.

Dear friends, the duty of all those who hate apartheid racism, national oppression, aggression and war to join with us in the struggle against this system does not in any way imply any right on the part of these forces to transform the nature of our movement or to define its objectives. Thus we reject entirely and will always oppose the efforts of the Reagan Administration to recreate the ANC into a creature of their liking, a product of wishes of governments which are allied to the Botha regime and no longer an instrument created by our people to realise their fundamental aspirations.

Similarly, we will continue to reject all efforts to impose on us a definition of democracy which entrenches racism and the continued exploitation of our people. To talk of white minority rights is to propagate an anti-democratic principle. The government of our unitary, non-racial, democratic state will be based on the will of all our people exercised through one person one vote. To categorise the population of South Africa in racial or ethnic terms and advance a perspective of a federation of such entities is to seek to perpetuate apartheid and deny our own people a democratic system.

To question the right of our people to share in the wealth of our country is to circumscribe our democratic rights and to prepare for a situation in which it will be impossible radically to change the material conditions of millions of our people. It is to seek to create the circumstances in which it would be impossible to secure the equality of all our people, both black and white.

Comrades, the masses of our people are, in their millions, engaged in struggle precisely to achieve these objectives. This struggle has not only plunged the ruling class in our country into an enormous general crisis from which it becomes increasingly impossible to extricate itself; it is winning an increasing array of allies both inside South Africa and internationally. No states of emergency, massacres, assassinations, arrests and detentions will stop the movement forward towards the transfer of power to the people. Three and a half centuries of colonialism are now coming to a close. The rudiments of people's power are beginning to emerge even now, thanks to the enormous sacrifices that our people are making to establish a democratic order in our country.

The democratic movement heading our people's onslaught against the apartheid system has grown tremendously in strength in terms of mass following. But, more importantly, it has fully absorbed the lessons necessary to defend and protect its underground political formations that form the bedrock of the people's thrust forward. The indestructible unity and the growing capacity of this movement is graphically demonstrated during these days characterised by the most brutal fascist onslaught of the apartheid regime. The black working class, the backbone of this movement, has raised its struggle to a high point marked by a series of political strikes defiantly demanding the end of the state of emergency and the release of the detained leaders. The newly established Congress of South African Trade Unions towers at the head of the workers' revolutionary actions.

Our glorious people's army, Umkhonto we Sizwe, has intensified its military campaign against apartheid in pursuance of the programme charted by the leadership of our movement, marking 1986 as the year of Umkhonto we Sizwe. It has sunk its roots deep among the masses of our people whose combat formations it is leading to confront the military machine of the apartheid regime.

Thus comrades, on many fronts, millions of our people, in their various formations, are at war with the apartheid regime in pursuance of our strategic objective of seizure of power.

We are happy that the communists in our country are to be found among these millions, side by side with religious people, with people of other ideological persuasions, nationalists and others, all united by a common perspective of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa.

Socialist Countries

We are greatly strengthened by the fact that the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, Cuba, China and other socialist countries stand with us in the struggle to accomplish the noble objective of the national and social emancipation of our people. These countries, too, share the anti-apartheid ranks with the non-aligned states and many countries in Western Europe such as Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Greece and others, and above all with the African Front Line States and the Organisation of African Unity in general.

The National Executive Committee of the ANC takes this opportunity to pay warm tribute to the British Anti-Apartheid Movement for its consistent leadership of the British People in opposition to the connivance of the ruling circles of this country with the genocidal apartheid regime of South Africa. Your movement, acting in concert with the rapidly expanding 'Free South Africa Movement' in the United States, has fully exposed the bankruptcy of the policies pursued by the Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan Administrations designed to protect the Botha regime from effective international isolation, including the imposition of comprehensive, mandatory economic sanctions. Yet this remains the unshakeable demand of our people.

We must maintain constant vigilance to defeat the deceitful manoeuvres of these imperialist administrations and of groupings such as the EEC, as reflected in the just-concluded visits by the British Foreign Secretary to South and Southern Africa.

Dear Comrades,
As we congratulate the South African Communist Party on its 65th anniversary, we call on all democratic anti-racist forces at home and abroad, committed to fight for the destruction of the criminal apartheid system, to unite as never before. The road we still have to travel may be difficult and bloody, but it will be made shorter exactly by the fact that we will proceed along its length as a united force.

Long live the SACP!

Long live the anti-fascist alliance
between the ANC and the SACP!

Long live the unity of all democratic, anti-racist forces!

BUILDERS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

by Jack Simons

Communists by and large consider that social forces are the mainspring of change and development. The forces and relations of production, though an essential part of living, occur independently of individual wills. Social forces in Marxist-Leninist theory shape the struggle between competing classes.

Innovators, the inventors of ideas, techniques, machines and social systems, are part of the struggle, whether or not they recognise their role. The scientific-technological revolution of today is neither aloof nor non-aligned. Scientists and technologists may aid and abet Reagan's Star War project or work for world peace but in either event they constitute a social force and a factor in the class struggle.

"Men make their own history", said Marx. They do so in accordance with the prevailing relations and forces of production. If necessity is the mother of invention, the necessity arises from the material conditions of life.

Great men in history recognise the necessity and respond through appropriate action. It is not enough, said Marx, to interpret the world; the point is to change it!

In the world of politics, which embraces the struggle for state power and its control, the historical mission of communists is to accomplish the transition from the capitalist mode of production to socialism.

South African communists have an additional task. This is to reconcile the class struggle with the struggle for freedom from white domination, race discrimination and national oppression — in short, to combine radical socialism with national liberation.

The undertaking is beset with obstacles that arise from multiple cultures, embracing a variety of languages, traditions, habits, attitudes, values, beliefs; from barriers erected by apartheid autocrats against free and familiar social intercourse between members of diverse racial and cultural communities; the enormous gap in living standards and opportunities between white and black; and the harassment of the state authorities.

To overcome both natural and enforced cleavages, to draw people of different origins into a single party with no trace of racial or cultural exclusiveness, is a remarkable achievement which demands a high level of socialist conviction, political understanding, mutual respect and freedom from vulgar taboos associated with race prejudice and national chauvinism.

Revolutionary Pioneers

Such men and women are hard to find and develop. South Africa's revolutionary tradition is barely a century old; its working class is still largely in its infancy and has yet to acquire the habits and outlook of a proletarian culture. Few families, even today, have a tradition of revolutionary activity spanning three or even two generations.

Party members for the most part come from households and communities with a fairly recent rural background, a strong attachment to tradition, Christianity and, in characteristic South African style, more than a slight belief in the powers of the *nyanga*, who combines the art of a herbalist with the claims of a soothsayer.

A major function of the Party is to educate its members in revolutionary theory, instil habits of discipline, inculcate the principles of scientific socialism and blend them with the immediate, pressing aims of liberation from the evils of apartheid.

Added to the communists' difficulties was the "foreign" origin of their theory and ideology. It came from outside, imported mainly from Great Britain, together with trade unions, capitalism, Christianity and parliamentary democracy, all of which were adapted to conditions of South African colonialism. The immigrants came to improve their living standards, take advantage of opportunities provided by the diamond and gold boom, or fight in Britain's war against the Boer republics of Transvaal and the Orange Free State in 1899-1902.

Among them were class conscious members of labour parties, social democrats, trade unionists and radical intellectuals with scant respect for the colonial hierarchy of mine owners, Randlords, speculators, illicit dealers in diamonds and alcohol, brothel keepers and others from the seamy side of a mining population in its formative years.

The torch-bearers of radical socialism were upright dignified artisans or middle class professionals. They lost no time in throwing down the gauntlet to the mine magnates and their political underlings in the colonial government. The conflict began in the first years of British rule after the war and continued after 1910 when the four South African colonies came together in a Union sanctified by the British parliament on a basis of white supremacy that has persisted to the present time.

Three of the men who appear in this series of short sketches belong to the first crop of revolutionary pioneers. They are

★ David Ivon Jones (1883-1924)
★ William Henry Andrews (1870-1950)
★ Sidney Percival Bunting (1873-1936)

The remainder are South African born. One is of Asian descent; the others are Africans. Their names are:

★ Moses Mauane Kotane (1905-1978)
★ John B. Marks (1903-1972)
★ Yusuf Mohamed Dadoo (1909-1983)
★ Moses Mbheki Mncane Mabhida (1923-1986) — his profile was published in *The African Communist* No. 106 Third Quarter 1986.

This list is confined to senior office bearers, the general secretaries and chairmen of the Party, but does not include them all. Many others made valuable contributions to the spread of radical socialism in conjunction with the liberation movement. Among them were Edwin Mofutsanyana, his wife Josie Mpama, John Gomas, James La Guma, Abram Fischer, Johannes Nkosi, Michael Harmel, Eddie Roux, Albert Nzula, Alpheus Maliba and Ruth First.

The Party, like any human organisation, is made up of people. When referring to the Party, one has in mind the activities and ideas of individuals at a particular time and place. In the sketches, an attempt is made to portray the ups and downs of the Party as recorded in the lives of its leaders.

Between them they span most of the 65 years of the Party's existence since its formation in 1921. They mirror the fortunes of a revolutionary movement in the country notorious for its abuse of human rights, violation of international law, ruthless suppression of resistance to white autocracy, contemptuous disregard of the rule of law, and stubborn defiance of the world-wide demand for the abolition of apartheid.

Outlawed by Parliament in 1950, the Party has spent more than half its life-time in a political underground — spied upon by secret police, tapped and bugged, suppressed through banning orders, house arrests, detention and imprisonment; but it survives.

The story of its survival has yet to be told. This much can be said, however: the Party has at all times contributed much to the fight against the white autocracy, its imperialist backers and monopoly capital. The quality of that contribution appears in the following sketches.

IVON JONES

A revolutionary by nature and Marxist by choice, Jones lived only twelve years in South Africa (1909-20) but to very good effect. It was here that he joined the socialist movement which, he remarked in later years, "brought the zest into life for me". A great theorist, he had a flair for the short pungent phrase, as when he wrote in 1918 that the South African "governing class must almost be called the governing race".

Born in the Welsh industrial town of Aberystwyth, he contracted tuberculosis at an early age, emigrated to New Zealand where he hunted rabbits for a living, moved on to South Africa in the Transvaal and worked as a clerk for the Victoria Falls Power Company. Here he took part in a strike, the only office worker to do so, and lost his job. Turning to full time politics,he was elected General Secretary of the Labour Party in 1914 and in the same year member of the Transvaal Provincial Council.

The outbreak of war saved him from the fate of a successful liberal-labour man, enmeshed in white politics and aloof from the aspirations of the black majority. With Bunting , Andrews and a substantial number of top labour leaders, he denounced the government's pro-war policy, founded the War-on-War Movement, and in 1915 broke from the Labour Party to form the International Socialist League, of which he became the first secretary-editor, responsible for producing *The International*, a weekly paper of high repute among radical socialists.

Though isolated on the war issue, they retained their links with white workers in whose revolutionary potential they believed passionately. But they refused to condone racism. "Not until we free the Natives can we hope to free the Whites", wrote Jones in October 1915; and he blamed racial intolerance for the refusal of whites to rally under the banner of solidarity for peace and friendship between peoples.

The Russian Revolution of 1917 was another turning point on the road to mature communism. With remarkable insight Jones hailed the February phase as "a bourgeois revolution, but arriving when the night of capitalism is far spent." The proletarian component, he predicted, would advance on its own, "to pursue the class war at home and the Socialist Republic in all countries" The great October revolution proved that the international socialists were right. "We must educate the people in the principles of the Russian Revolution" wrote Jones in November 1917, and "prepare the workers against any attempt to mobilise them against their Russian comrades".

A Famous Leaflet

He acted accordingly. While in a Pietermaritzburg health centre in 1918, he with L.H. Greene wrote a famous leaflet headed "The Bolsheviks Are Coming". It explained in Zulu and English that "Bolshevism means the rule of the working class" and would soon spread. "Do not be misled when the capitalist press reviles the Bolsheviks ... They slander the Bolsheviks because they fear you will follow suit. They are afraid the workers in South Africa will also become free and independent."

For this the local magistrate sentenced the two men to fines and imprisonment, saying that the leaflet was libellous, treasonable and diabolical; but the supreme court upheld an appeal and set the convictions aside.

Jones, wasting away with tuberculosis, left South Africa in November 1920 never to return. While on his way to Moscow he wrote a long report on South Africa for the Communist International. The divisive effects of Afrikaner nationalism, British chauvinism and white racism, he noted, inhibited the growth of a strong socialist movement.

Generously paid out of the African's miserable underpaid labour, white workers lorded it over him and developed an increasing resistance to communist ideas. Though Africans were no more than cheap sources of labour in the colonial system, they soon became good trade unionists and loyal agitators for their class. National interests could not be distinguished from class interests and formed the basis of "a revolutionary nationalist movement in the fullest meaning of Lenin's term."

The immediate needs of white trade unionism absorbed the attention of ISL militants and "throw the more difficult task of native emancipation into the background." It required a special department and could do with international aid. "A few missionaries, revolutionists who need a spell of sunshine, would be very welcome".

In his last letter to Andrews, written shortly before he died from the tuberculosis sanatorium at Yalta on 13 April 1924 Jones argued that the struggle in South Africa took the form of a "colonial national movement of liberation". The appropriate standards to apply were set out in the *Theses on the National and Colonial Question.* "We stand for Bolshevism", he proudly affirmed, "and in all minds Bolshevism stands for the native worker"

W.H. (BILL) ANDREWS

Andrews infuriated ultra-leftists with his cool, logical reasoning and exposure of sentimental humbug. Unable to find fault with his honesty and socialist sincerity, they fell back on mere abuse, calling him a sleek, well-paid official (on £25 a month!), political opportunist and labour fakir who while preaching revolution took office and title under capitalism.

His opponents could not, however, fault him on his working class roots, commitment to the workers' interests, energy and ability as an organiser. A forceful speaker, good looking, dignified and eloquent, he was, like Ramsay Macdonald, a prototype of the labour aristocrat. Unlike Ramsay Mac, however, he never betrayed his class.

Born in Suffolk, England, into a worker's family, he emigrated to South Africa, in 1893 worked as a fitter on the railway in the Transvaal, helped to form the first Trades and Labour Council in 1902, and in 1909 became the first chairman of the Labour party. Elected in 1912 to Parliament, he with Jones, Bunting and other leading Party members resigned on the war issue in 1914 and for this reason lost his parliamentary seat in 1915.

Bill represented the International Socialist League in the election of 1916 for the Transvaal Provincial Council. Addressing an all-white electorate, he put forward the League's platform of non-racial unity: " It is time for the white workers to deal with the native as a man and a fellow worker and not as a chattel slave or serf. Only that way lies freedom and justice for all".

He was Chairman of the International Socialist League, became the first Secretary-editor of the Communist Party in 1921, and was elected in the following year to the Executive Committee of the Communist International (ECCI).

In between he and his fellow communists took a leading part in the "Rand Revolt" of 1922. They had lost ground among white workers on the war issue, but gained their confidence by condemning the collaboration between Archie Crawford's Industrial Federation and the Chamber of Mines. The outbreak of the miners' strike confirmed their belief in the revolutionary spirit of white workers. Without hesitation the Party acted on the principle "Be with the workers wherever they are, in struggle, victory or defeat".

Working through the Miners' Council of Action, formed in July 1921, the militants denounced the negotiations conducted by the augmented executive committee of the Industrial Federation with the Chamber of Mines. Andrews declared that concessions offered by the Chamber were a sign of weakness. "The side which calls for a truce, especially when the fight is barely begun, confesses defeat". He advised the strikers to "Hit as hard and as quickly as possible!".

The augmented executive declared an immediate general strike on 6 March, 1922 — and abdicated, leaving the leadership in the hands of the Committee of Action. Andrews sat on the Committee until he and the other members were arrested under martial law and imprisoned in the Fort, where they remained for the rest of the strike.

Revenge

Though the working class lost the strike, it took revenge at the general election of 1924 by helping to vote the Smuts government out of office. A Nationalist-Labour "Pact" government took over. The Communists condemned the Pact, predicting that the Labour Party would wither away in the embrace of Afrikaner nationalism.

In spite of these misgivings, Andrews and C.F. Glass, the Party organiser, sponsored a motion for affiliation to the Labour Party at the annual conference of the C.P. in December 1924. Bunting opposed the motion, which was defeated by a slender majority. Their main task, said Bunting, was to take the communist message to the oppressed and build a mass basis among Africans. By adopting this policy, the conference made a great turn to the left. Bunting and E.R. (Eddie) Roux, a young Y.C.L. leader were elected chairman and vice-chairman of the Party respectively.

Andrews retired from the post of secretary-editor in February 1925 and went back to his trade as fitter. Withdrawing from the movement's political wing he resumed his role as trade union leader. He was elected to the council of his union, the Amalgamated Engineers, in January 1926 and in March became the secretary of the S.A. Association of Employees' Organisation, later renamed the S.A. Trade Union Congress (Trades and Labour Council).

As senior trade union executive he became enmeshed in white labour politics but clung to his socialist principles. A member of the government appointed Economic and Wage Commission of 1925, he took advantage of his position to insert in the record a Marxist version of the State, defining it as "an organ of class domination". South Africa, he affirmed, "cannot even pretend to be a democratic State, but is frankly an oligarchy allowing only a small minority of its adult males to have a voice in the selection of their rulers". In an article written for the Alberta Labour Annual in 1926, he accused the government of "ruthlessly and savagely" suppressing "any attempt by the native worker to assert himself as a man and a citizen". Though the labour movement supported the policy because of sectional interests, it would never become a dominant factor in public affairs unless it opened both political and industrial doors to the great mass of working people.

Nevertheless Andrews gradually drifted away from the Party, retaining only a nominal membership, and was expelled for this reason in 1931 during the great purge that drove Bunting and other stalwarts into political exile. Explaining his policy as secretary of the Trades and Labour Council, he told the Party's political bureau that he had done what he could "to present a barrier against reactionary tendencies and racial antagonisms and to encourage and assist the militant elements".

He resigned for reasons of health from the TLC in 1932, underwent an operation in England, and on his return put his energies into left wing organisations such as the League against Fascism and War and Friends of the Soviet Union. He also resumed his place in the Party, of which he became the chairman when it transferred its headquarters to Cape Town in 1939.

Bill withdrew from the chair in 1949 at the age of 79, after standing trial with other members of the central executive committee on a charge of sedition arising out of the African miners' strike of 1946. The supreme court quashed the indictment in May 1948; the Nationalist Party government came to power later in the month and withdrew the charge in October. Unable to persuade the court to convict the Communists, the government used it slender parliamentary majority to ban the Party under the Suppression of Communism Act of 1950. Andrews and Michael Harmel voted against a resolution of the central committee to disband. Comrade Bill died a few months later.

S.P. BUNTING

Though the most dedicated, disciplined and loyal of Party members, SPB like most genuine revolutionaries was a stubborn non-conformist, difficult to budge once he had made up his mind. Yet he was capable of making drastic changes in life-style and thinking, as when he gave up the habits of the upper class English family into which we was born for the hardships of a radical socialist in South Africa.

An Oxford graduate, he came to the Transvaal as a lieutenant in the British army to fight the Boer Republics, like many other young men of his social class. He was an intimate of Creswell and Wybergh, two mining engineers who had much to do with the introduction of colour bars on the mines; and in 1909 became secretary of Patrick Duncan's White Expansionist Society. Well read, ndeed learned, and an outstanding musician, he could have worked his way to the top of the colonial society that flourished under Milner after the war. Instead he moved to the political Left, joining the Labour Party and heading its Rural Committee, commissioned to recruit Afrikaners into the party. His experience aroused his sympathy with their anti-war stand in 1914.

In that year he won the Bezuidenhout provincial council seat for Labour with the aid of a manifesto that attacked the ruling class for suppressing the unions, and its determination to replace white workers by "cheap, unenfranchised unorganised Kaffirs". He warned that White S.A. was in danger: "only the Labour Party resisted the real Anarchic Conspiracy against Society". At that point in his development he seemed set to becoming a liberal-labour leader; but he took another turn to the left by joining the War On War movement, and then moving to the International Socialist League.

Here he advanced with great strides to a revolutionary position. At the League's first Congress in 1916, he moved the adoption of a Petition of Rights. It called for the abolition of pass laws, indentured labour and mine compounds, and demanded equal rights for Africans. He and Andrews stood for election to the provincial council in 1917. Their manifesto urged workers to emulate the Russian Bolsheviks. The League would continue to strive for the downfall of capitalism and its replacement by an industrial democracy. The white mob took unkindly to this attack on the system, broke up their meetings and contributed to a political climate in which both men lost their deposits.

Bunting's law practice brought him into close contact with Africans harassed by the police. He appeared frequently in court in their defence. One day in March 1919 while coming out of the Johannesburg magistrate's court he was assaulted by the hooligans. Writing about the incident in the next issue of *The International*, he criticised the "Johannesburg lunch-time crowd, many of them no doubt trade unionists fresh from cheering Bolshevism in the Town Hall" who attacked Africans in the street and went on "to mob the editor of this paper as a presumed sympathiser of their victims".

White miners balloted for strike action in February 1920 and obtained an increase of 8s. a shift. African miners followed with sectional strikes for a wage of between 5s. and 10s. a day and access to more responsible and better paid work. The owners granted an increase of 3d or 5d a shift.

The strike put 8,600 white miners out of work. They drew full pay during the stoppage and on some mines took on the African's work of tramming and shovelling. This provoked the League into circulating its famous "Don't Scab" leaflet, drafted by Bunting. "The Native workers are beginning to wake up", it said, and it appealed for support on grounds of fair play, trade union principle, labour solidarity and self-interest.

Foundation Member

A founding member of the Communist Party, he attended the unity conference which formed it in July 1921 and continued to edit the International. In this position he had the responsible task of explaining the Party's policy on the 1922 strike. He argued that the strike was about wages, nothing else; and urged the strikers to adopt the slogan of equal pay for equal work, rather than enforcement of the colour bar. But his pamphlet "Red Revolt and the Rand Strike" , written after the strike, contained an outright defence of the colour bar regulations. Their repeal, he concluded, would not benefit the African worker, and might even harm them.

He acted as Party secretary and editor while Andrews attended the Executive Committee of the Communist International in 1923. In the following year a Nationalist-Labour "pact" government came to power. It launched a harsh offensive against black communities in which Creswell's followers participated. The Party conference, held in December 1924, responded by rejecting a motion to apply for affiliation to the Labour Party, and elected Bunting to the position of Chairman. This was a notable event, marking the beginning of a sharp turn away from involvement in white politics and towards the African working class. Under Bunting's leadership, the Party became a predominantly African movement, attracting such valuable recruits as Kotane, Josie Mpama, Edwin Mofutsanyana, J.B. Marks, Johannes Nkosi and Gana Makabeni. Three Africans — Makabeni, Khaile and Thibedi — were elected to the central committee in December 1927.

In June 1928 Bunting led a delegation of three — himself, his wife and Eddie Roux — to the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in Moscow. They met with much criticism for the Party's failure to act according to the principles set out in the CI's thesis of 1921 on the National and Colonial Question. The Comintern's resolution on "The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies" noted that the Party scored "definite successes" among African workers, urged it to struggle "still more energetically for complete equality of rights", combat "racial prejudice" in the ranks of white workers, "eradicate entirely such prejudices from its own ranks" and "consistently put forward the creation of an independent native republic, with simultaneous guarantees for the rights of the white minority".

The formula, which has since gained widespread acceptance in all sections of the liberation movement, had the effect of a bomb blast on the Party and its supporters. Bunting suppressed his misgivings and loyally abided by the Comintern's ruling, but some old party members like Andrews and Tim Tinker would have nothinng to do with the "Black Republic". The annual conference held in December 1928 approved a programme drafted by Bunting which included the demand for majority African rule, and elected a new executive committee consisting of Bunting as chairman, Wolton as general secretary and editor, Albert Nzula as organiser, and E.S. Sachs as vice chairman. The committee members included two other Africans, Thibedi and Nkosi, Rebecca Bunting, Molly Wollton and Sam Malkinson.

Bunting and Wolton were appointed the Party's candidates in the 1929 general election, Bunting for the constituency of Tembuland in the Transkei, Wolton for the Cape Flats. Both were very heavily defeated. The campaign in Tembuland encountered enormous hostility from white hooligans, police and officials who did all they could, legally and otherwise, to break up meetings and frighten the electors away. The administration instituted more than a dozen prosecutions against Bunting and his agent Gana Makabeni at the height of the campaign, thereby wasting five valuable weeks.

The Transkei, declared Bunting in his election address, was "a principal labour recruiting and breeding annex of the Chamber of Mines". It controlled the administration from behind the scenes in such a way that the maximum number of able-bodied men left their homes for the mines. By returning a communist, the voters would demonstrate their will to seize liberty, equality and self-government. Wolton left the country shortly after the election on a visit. During his absence Albert Nzula, was appointed assistant general secretary of the party, the first African to hold this position.

Depression Years

Difficult years lay ahead. 1929 saw the start of the great economic depression in the world of capitalism. Nazi terrorism in Germany encouraged the spread of reaction, also in South Africa. International Communism responded by flushing out "right wing deviationists", real and imaginary. Wolton branded Bunting as one, and returned from Moscow with authority to act against the "right wing-danger". Elected General Secretary in 1931, during Nzula's absence at the Party school in Moscow, Wolton saw fit to rid the leadership of "opportunism, white chauvinism and passivity" by expelling leading activists: Sam Malkinson, Andrews, Tyler, Sachs, Fanny Klenerman, Weinbren — all prominent trade unionists, whom he accused of class collaboration, reformism, and neglect of "red trade unionism".

Bunting's case was different. He was said to have appealed for leniency when defending political prisoners in court, and spoke on the same platform as members of the I.C.U. and African National Congess. When he tried to appeal to the membership against the expulsions, he was publicly abused for allegedly putting forward an opposition programme. He replied that he had no theoretical differences with the Party leadership or members, but failed to persuade the political bureau. Kotane objected to the central committee in February 1934 that the Party had a predominantly "European outlook" and should be thoroughly Africanised, speaking the language of the people and putting forward their demands as official policy. He gained the support of most members, thereby putting an end to the short period of sectarian intolerance. Wolton left South Africa for good in 1933. His side-kick Lazar Bach, having been dropped from the political bureau, left in 1935 to complain to the Comintern in Moscow. Bunting, however, failed to recover from the effects of the unwarranted and malicious vendetta against him. His health suffered, forcing him to give up his lawyer's practice. After recovering from a mild stroke, he found work as a viola player in a theatre orchestra. Prevented by partial paralysis from playing in the orchestra, he took on a job of caretaker in a block of flats. Many years before he had given up a directorship in a Natal wattle company which he thought conflicted with his Party membership. He had no source of income other than his earnings, and had spent all his savings on the Party press. Though dedicated and selfless to the point of imprudence, he was slandered in the Party press as an aristocrat, son of the British peer, an absentee landlord exploiting workers on a Natal wattle farm, and a rich lawyer in his own right. He died in hospital on May 25, 1936. *Umsebenzi* published a tribute, citing his record as Party leader for many years, one of the first to recognise the importance of Africans in the struggle against imperialism. It was under his leadership, the paper continued, that the Party began to organise them for their emancipation. "Thousands of exploited and oppressed South Africans will remember Comrade Bunting as a staunch fighter".

(The series will be continued in the next issue of *The African Communist.*)

NOW MORE THAN EVER!

The significance of international solidarity with our struggle

by Nyawuza

The question of international solidarity with the South African liberation movement has come to the forefront recently in a much sharper way than before. A discussion of some of the questions raised by this issue is of interest to us for ideological clarity and practical-political considerations. But before we deal with the implications and significance of international solidarity for our struggle, let us look at its international dimensions.

Two reports on this question have been published recently. They deal with international solidarity in its global context. The one is a report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues — the Brandt Commission — and the other is a report by Fidel Castro, President of Cuba, to the Seventh Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries. Fidel Castro was then chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is not our task here to assess the two reports in any detail. We mention them because they unmistakably show that there is a class struggle surrounding the issue of international solidarity. International solidarity cannot be viewed outside of the ongoing class and national liberation struggles.

Indeed, it is an integral aspect of class and national liberation struggles.

A closer look at the Brandt Report reveals some of the complexities of international class struggle and solidarity. Although one may agree with some of the formulations in the Brandt Commission Report, it poses problems. For instance, the Report states:

> "There are obvious objections to a simplified view of the world as being divided into two camps. The 'North' includes two rich industrialised countries south of the equator, Australia and New Zealand. The 'South' ranges from a booming half-industrialised nation like Brazil to poor land-locked or island countries such as Chad or the Maldives. A few southern countries — mostly oil exporters — have higher per capita incomes than some of the northern countries. But in general terms, although neither is a uniform or permanent grouping, 'North' and 'South' are broadly synonymous with 'rich' and 'poor', 'developed' and 'developing'. . .
>
> ". . . our observations also apply to the industrialised countries of Eastern Europe which do not want to be lumped together with the West or to be contrasted with the South in a division which they see as the consequence of colonial history. When we speak of the 'South' we also usually exclude China, which has not formally joined itself with them."[1]

Fidel Castro sees the problem differently:

> "The world is undergoing one of the worst economic crises in its history. It is a crisis that has its origins in the major capitalist powers but has most brutally affected the underdeveloped countries, which are now experiencing the sharpest economic deterioration in the whole post-war period . . . The present crisis is part of the typical cyclical course of the developed capitalist economies. Now, however, it has acquired new complications and aggravating dimensions."[2]

These two opposite interpretations of the nature of the crisis facing the tricontinental world affect the interpretation and meaning of international solidarity.

The theory of 'North-South dialogue' is dangerous because it tends to use geographical boundaries rather than socio-economic criteria. The production relations tend to be submerged or 'hidden' by the development of productive forces. The people of the capitalist 'North' are lumped together with their exploiters. This evokes a 'sense of guilt' and 'shame' with the peoples of the 'North', with the result that their assistance to the 'South' is seen as 'charity' and 'pity'. Charity and pity are not the same thing as solidarity. Those who pity are not on the same pedestal as those pitied.

The rights of the people of the underdeveloped countries are ignored. We are referring to the right to nationalise foreign companies, the right to struggle against imperialism and the right to ask for solidarity from the people of the 'North'. We agree with Castro that the source of underdevelopment is colonialism and imperialism.

What we are saying is that questions connected with international solidarity affect many aspects of social life, mass media, language and concepts, ideology and politics, and even attitudes of people.

Africa and the Communist World

The colonialists and imperialists did not only plunder Africa: they tried to ensure that nationalist movements did not emerge and, if they could not stop the process, they isolated them from the rest of progressive humanity, especially the revolutionary international working class and communist movement whose centre then was the Comintern.

It is a matter of historical record that the question of solidarity with the African people (this question was then called the 'Negro Question') was first raised in the international working class and communist movement by Lenin in his discussion with the American journalist John Reed, at the Second Congress of the Comintern in 1920. Sub-saharan Africa was then regarded as forming part of the 'Negro Question', that is, problems facing the black people in America, the Caribbean and Africa south of the Sahara. Since then the question has preoccupied the revolutionary working class movement. The Communist Parties of the USA and South Africa played a crucial role in these deliberations.

There were also other forces who were involved in the question of solidarity with Africa at this time. Dr Du Bois, the black American academic, communist and African stateman, is a case in point. Marcus Garvey, a Jamaican nationalist and black world leader, needs special mention. Ho Chi Minh, who led anti-colonial revolutionaries in France, is another example. Since then many outstanding figures and trade unions, workers and academics throughout the world have championed the cause of Africa's independence.

The Two Traditions

The ANC was formed in 1912. Soon after its formation it developed links with the emergent socialist movement in South Africa and went further to establish contacts internationally. The story of the ANC delegations to England at this time is well known. These delegations met British authorities, but this in itself is not part of the internationalism of the ANC. Its internationalism in these cases lies in the fact that the ANC leadership used these occasions to meet progressive organisations, individuals and newspapers in Britain and this provided the ANC not only with contacts but with a platform. Sol Plaatje, the Secretary General of the ANC, even travelled to Canada and the United States for this purpose. By the time he left Britain he had succeeded in forming what we can call a forerunner of the Anti-Apartheid movement in Britain. The social forces to sustain these contacts were then still weak in Britain and South Africa.

The ANC went further than that. It had contacts with the Pan African Movement of Dr Du Bois. Dr Du Bois actually read Sol Plaatje's statement at the Third Conference of the Pan African movement held in Lisbon in 1921. The 1919 constitution of the ANC is relevant in this regard. It refers to the ANC as a 'Pan African Association'. Indeed the ANC was perhaps the first organisation in the world to state in its constitution that it adheres to the principles of 'Pan Africanism' which in the parlance of today would be African unity. This is about 50 years before the formation of the OAU. Even Dr Du Bois, the father of Pan Africanism, has this to say about the first Pan African Conference held in Paris in 1919, a conference which he initiated and organised:

"I was without credential or influence, but the idea took on."[3]

Even before that, the sentiments of African unity and solidarity had strong and deep roots in the people. Our national anthem Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika, composed by Enoch Mankayi Sontonga in 1897, talks of Afrika and not South Africa; 'uphondo lwayo' (its horn) which has to be lifted 'high' refers to Somalia, Ethiopia etc. in the Horn of Africa.

What we are saying is that our people then (and later through the ANC) demanded the unity of the African people in South Africa and on the continent of Africa. The ANC was demanding (not in strong words) the international condemnation of racism and colonialism.

The other tradition is that of proletarian internationalism. The emergence of the revolutionary working class movement among white workers in South Africa in 1915, and especially the formation of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1921, introduced a new element in black politics in South Africa — namely proletarian internationalism. South African communists, even before 1921, had contacts with the international communist movement and this widened our horizons and gave us a new platform. The Communist Party leaders in the 1920's attended Comintern Congresses and met Lenin who inspired them with his theories on the national and colonial question. The Communist Party sent reports on its activities to the Comintern and the leaders of the Communist Party wrote articles on the South African situation in the various journals of the Comintern. They served on the highest organs of the Comintern.

These and other activities led to the adoption at the 6th Congress of the Comintern in 1928 of the Black Republic slogan — the two stage theory. The presence of Gumede, the ANC President General, and La Guma, a

Communist Party leader, at the Brussels Conference of the League Against Imperialism in 1927, meant a qualitatively new stage of cooperation between African nationalism and proletarian internationalism in South Africa.

What we are saying is that in the liberation struggle in South Africa there have been two traditions of internationalism: the internationalism of the ANC and the proletarian internationalism of the Communist Party. The two are not identical but they are interlinked. The internationalism of the ANC has been so influenced by proletarian internationalism that the ANC accepts aspects of proletarian internationalism. On the other hand the ANC's struggle for national liberation has had such an impact on the Communist Party's thinking that the CP has since 1928 advanced the two-stage theory.

In South Africa this could not be otherwise since the Communist Party is organised as a party outside the ANC structures and the communists are also active within the ANC. Those communists who are active within the ANC do not therefore become 'nationalists'. They remain proletarian internationalists and patriots who fight within the national liberation movement to advance internationalist positions: to infuse concepts and aspects of proletarian internationalism into the broad struggle for national liberation.

Wrong Theories

Two events that influenced political developments in South Africa in 1984 were the Nkomati Accord and the introduction of the new constitution with Coloureds and Indians as junior partners. True, these are separate issues but the racist regime banked on them to destroy the ANC and the democratic forces in South Africa. The mere fact that since then more than 2000 people have been killed tells the whole story. It is equally true that there were other problems that faced our people, such as bus fare and rent increases, police and army brutality, death squads, Inkatha and the education crisis, etc.

These developments have had their repercussions in the sphere of international solidarity. In these last 24 months we have seen mounting solidarity with our people. This is a welcome development. But there are problems. The international television screens have been showing Africans dying and running away from the police and army. This has developed a sense of guilt and sympathy in some circles in the international community. If those television cameramen were standing behind the people (and not behind the army), the international community would have developed a different sense of judgment and attitude. What we are saying is that there is an interconnection between mass media and international solidarity and pity is not exactly what we want.

Some of the people who support us do so for various reasons that do not exactly correspond with our aspirations and political programme. To be sure, the ANC cannot drive away such people. But the problem is that we are being supported for the wrong reasons! To be fair, this is a tiny minority in the solidarity front but the very fact that it exists means that we need to be careful and give guidance to their genuinely felt anti-apartheid sentiments and feelings. We cannot afford to remain passive or neutral on this important issue of the correct orientation of solidarity work.

There is another equally destructive trend of thought. We are told that those whites who have turned their backs on the regime and on apartheid, those whites who come to join us, deserve more respect because they have more to lose. This is the sort of thinking I would not subscribe to. The blacks in South Africa, at least the majority of them, have nothing to lose in the destruction of apartheid. They have everything to gain and this should be a source of inspiration and respect for them — not paternalism or pity but revolutionary pride in the future of our struggle and the forces of the future or rather the forces that can — and are destined — to bring about real change in South Africa. These are the blacks together with those whites who have joined hands with the blacks. This is decided by the nature and character of our struggle which is the national liberation of the black majority, especially the Africans, and the social emancipation of all racial groups, including the whites. International solidarity can only be based on this premise and understanding.

What about the question of 'reforms'? This is connected with the question of sanctions. We are told that sanctions will hurt blacks most. This is said by people who cannot claim to be spokesmen of the black oppressed majority; people who are very much involved on the side of the racists. Bishop Tutu has called for sanctions and Winnie Mandela has gone on record as saying "we do not want to be fat slaves". There are those who say Britain cannot 'go it alone' and others say we are waiting for Britain to start.

Two things need to be said about all this. Investments in South Africa started with the discovery of diamonds and gold in the last third of the 19th century. Since then the conditions of the blacks have not improved. They have deteriorated.

The second point is the racism inherent in these arguments. We are told that apartheid is about to deliver the goods — don't rock the boat. The slave-owner wants to liberate his slaves. Slaves be quiet. The international community must keep quiet because 'reforms' are about to take place in South Africa.

Solidarity is not Interference

In the international solidarity field there is a tendency to confuse solidarity with interference in our politics. Some 'enthusiastic' people lecture us on how or how best to struggle, what methods to use, how to defeat the enemy and what we should be fighting for. Others tend to see the developments in South Africa as 'spontaneous'. This has the effect of undermining the role of the ANC.[4] There are also those who praise the ANC and downgrade the role being played by the South African Communist Party. Jack Barnes of the American Socialist Workers' Party unwittingly gave expression to this trend when he said:

> "But a communist leadership cannot be built in South Africa by trying to leap over the democratic revolution to get more quickly to the socialist revolution. *It is only through the struggle to lead the democratic revolution, to carry out its minimum program to the end, that a communist party will be forged in South Africa.*[5] (Emphasis added).

Part of this interference is the attempt to 'impose' the PAC on the South African struggle, with the result that the ANC internationally (and not internally where the PAC is non-existent) is forced to carry the PAC on its back. Dead weight is very heavy.

Winnie Mandela and the Soviet Union

The Johannesburg *Star* (19.2.86) reported that Winnie Mandela sent a militant salute to the Soviet Union and thanked it for its fraternal solidarity. This was broadcast on Moscow's radio service on February 13.

The Soviet Daily *Pravda* (14.2.86) published the interview. This is what she told the Tass correspondent, Aleksandr Ossipov, in a telephone interview from Harare, an interview which was constantly intercepted and disconnected:

> "I had waited for many years for an opportunity personally to convey my spirited greetings to the Land of the Soviets and to thank it for its fraternal solidarity with the freedom fighters in my country . . . The Soviet Union is our hope and inspiration. We continue learning staunchness and fortitude from the Soviet people who for us are an example in their fight for freedom and a model of fidelity to internationalist duty. In Soviet Russia a truly popular form of government has turned from a dream to a reality. The land of the Soviets is a true friend and ally of all oppressed peoples fighting against the evil forces of world reaction.
>
> "The South African patriots wholeheartedly welcome and support the peace initiatives put forward by Mikhail Gorbachov. Those initiatives, they believe, point the way to universal peace and security and to creating conditions for removing the dangerous seat of international tension in the South Africa represented by colonialism and racism.
>
> "Those are the goals that the South African patriots are pursuing together with the USSR and with all progressive humanity. Their struggle for freedom is

> inseparably linked with the worldwide movement for peace, whose standard bearer is the great Soviet Union. Together with all peace and freedom loving peoples, the South African patriots are mounting an offensive on the arch enemy regime of apartheid. The just struggle of South Africa's freedom fighters has the humane aim of creating a peaceful and democratic state that will join the ranks of the progressive forces. The Soviet people's support is specially vital, as it inspires the South African patriots (and) gives them strength".

These words of a courageous woman uttered right inside South Africa testify not only to the calibre of the one who uttered them, but also to the character of our liberation struggle, to our internationalism.

The Meaning of Solidarity

Sol Plaatje, the first Secretary General of the ANC, was conscious of the interconnection between social stereotypes and international solidarity. As early as 1916 he called for assistance for our struggle:

> "This appeal is not on behalf of the naked hordes of cannibals who are represented in fantastic pictures displayed in the shop windows in Europe, most of them imaginary . . ."[6]

What Plaatje was saying was that solidarity with our people is not 'helping' some 'needy', poor and naked blacks in the jungles of Africa. 'Humanitarian aid' is part of it, but solidarity is broader than that. In South Africa we are fighting, being killed and jailed for a noble cause. We are fighting to weaken international imperialism and to strengthen the forces of anti-imperialism, peace and social progress.

South Africa is of strategic importance for the West. The minerals exploited there — to say nothing of the cheap black labour which guarantees super profits in the West — are of vital importance to the Reagan Administration's military-industrial complex. The Reagan Administration is obsessed with the idea of 'military superiority' over the Soviet Union, and the minerals in South Africa are useful in this regard.

The Middle East is rich in oil and this oil reaches the West via the Cape sea route: therefore there is a need to 'protect' the sea lanes from 'Soviet penetration'. This anti-communism and anti-Sovietism serves to legitimise the militarisation of the Indian Ocean. Diego Garcia has now been reduced to an American military base. Our struggle is therefore part of the struggle for peace. Apartheid, it is often said, is a threat to peace. But looked at from the position of the people of Angola, Namibia and South Africa, apartheid is more than a threat to peace — it is a violation of peace.

Surely there is a connection between the struggles of our people and the struggles of the people of the world in their own countries. The mere existence of apartheid — not taking into consideration the activities of apartheid embassies and consulates — is an encouragement and inspiration for racists and reactionaries throughout the world. Therefore support for our struggle means promotion of other people's struggles for progress in their countries.

But before the international community supports us effectively, they have to know us. We have consistently to explain our position to the international community. People do not support us because they like us as individuals. It is our policies, politics and actions that motivate them to support us.

It therefore becomes necessary to explain to the international community that our principal task at this moment is to intensify our political and military offensive inside South Africa. Relying on our own strength through action, we will frustrate the schemes of the enemies of the peoples of Africa and continue our forward march to the destruction of the system of white minority colonial domination in our country. The central and immediate question of South African politics is the overthrow of the white minority regime, the seizure of power by the people (not power-sharing with the racists) and the uprooting by the victorious masses of the entire apartheid system of colonial and racist domination, fascist tyranny and super-exploitation of the black majority as well as imperialist aggression and expansionism.

These questions will be, and are being, settled in struggle within the borders of our country and nowhere else.

We are entitled to expect that those anywhere in the world who count themselves among the anti-colonial and anti-racist forces will join hands with us. This is the meaning of international solidarity as opposed to Willly Brandt's 'geography of solidarity.'

Footnotes

1. *North-South: A Programme for Survival.* The report of the Independent Commission on International Development Issues under the chairmanship of Willy Brandt, London 1980 p.31.
2. Castro, F. *The World Economic and Social Crisis — its impact on the underdeveloped countries, its sombre prospects and the need to struggle if we are to survive.* Report to the Seventh Summit Conference of Non-Aligned Countries, Havana, 1983 pp.11 and 29.
3. *The African Communist* No 15, Oct-Dec, 1963.
4. Legassick, M. "South Africa in Crisis: what route to democracy?" in *African Affairs,* London journal of the Royal African Society, Vol. 84, No 337, October 1985.
5. Barnes, J. "The Coming Revolution in South Africa" in: *New International, New York, Vol. 2, No 2, 1985* p.55.
6. Plaatje, S. *Native Life in South Africa — Before and Since the European War and Boer Rebellion,* Johannesburg, 1982, p.19.

The Causes of Coups

ARMIES AND POLITICS IN AFRICA

By V. Seme

Over the past year we have witnessed a number of successful and unsuccessful coups d'etat in Black Africa. In November and December 1985 there were four abortive coup plots in Guinea-Bissau, Ghana, Liberia and Nigeria. 13 out of 16 ECOWAS members in West Africa are ruled by military regimes. Since 1960 almost every country in our continent has experienced the intervention of the army, and it is clear that in future developments the army will continue to be a focus of attention. In this article the author deals firstly with some general and methodological questions pertaining to political and state power, and the correlation between coups and revolution; and secondly with a concrete case, Nigeria.

All political power contains the properties of force, coercion and compulsion. But no class or combination of classes can rely only on brute force to consolidate and maintain political power. At some point or other those exercising power have to seek by fair means or deception the consent of a significant section of society. Ultimately political power does not lie in the hands of those who have access to and control the barrel of the gun; it lies with those social forces that own and control the means of production, distribution and exchange, that is the industries, factories, mines and banks. In the capitalist-oriented countries in Africa the means of production, distribution and exchange are controlled by international monopoly capital working in concert with their local allies and agents. Even the most reactionary capitalist state seeks to legitimise its power by creating and developing an ideological base. This may take the form of racialism, chauvinism, anti-communism and tribalism.

The economies of African states south of the Sahara are mostly underdeveloped. Consequently the two main contending classes of capitalism, the bourgeoisie and the working class, are not yet fully matured. The terrible legacy of colonialism, present day neo-colonial and imperialist exploitation, natural calamities and the incompetence and corruption of governments have driven the African countries into a deep economic morass. Black Africa faces the most awesome and appalling problems of mass poverty with an estimated 150 million people still under threat of death by famine or starvation.

Given the low level of economic development and the inchoate character and nature of the two main contending classes, the superstructure in many African countries is relatively even more autonomous than in more developed capitalist countries. Thus even radical shifts in the superstructure may take a long time before making a real impact on the base. The weaknesses of the political edifice make it easier for power to change hands at the top. At the same time these weaknesses can lead to deep-going changes if power is captured by the revolutionary forces. Both during the struggle for power and after its capture class conflict takes the most intense form. Political power, as Ruth First points out, "is more than office in local council, parliament and cabinet; it is access to the key levers of the economy. Elite leaderships in power use the state to manipulate jobs and contracts for themselves and their followers and, ultimately, to facilitate their emergence as a class."[1] She goes on to show how those in power use their positions to allocate scarce resources to strengthen their own base by identifying with a particular region and/or communal/ethnic group.

The state, as the classics of Marx, Engels and Lenin emphasise, ultimately represents — notwithstanding its immense complexity and contradictoriness — the power of one or more classes over other subordinate class or classes. Within this state structure the army, police, para-military and security apparatus are the chief instruments of force and coercion. The State, as Engels explains:

> "is a product of society at a certain stage of development; it is the admission that this society has become entangled in an insoluble contradiction with itself, that it is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to dispel. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, might not consume themselves and society in sterile struggle, a power seemingly standing above society became necessary for the purpose of moderating the conflict, of

> keeping it within the bounds of 'order'; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it, and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the State . . . As the State arose from the need to hold class antagonisms in check, but as it arose, at the same time, in the midst of the conflict of these classes, it is, as a rule, the state of the most powerful, economically dominant class, and thus acquires new means of holding down and exploiting the oppressed class. Thus, the state of antiquity was above all the state of the slave owners for the purpose of holding down the slaves, as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument of exploitation of wage labour by capital. *By the way of exception, however, periods occur in which the warring classes balance each other so nearly that the state power, as ostensible mediator, acquires, for the moment, a certain degree of independence of both.* Such was the absolute monarchy of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which held the balance between the nobility and the class of burghers; such was *the Bonapartism of the First, and still more of the Second French Empire, which played off the proletariat against the bourgeoisie and the bourgeoisie against the proletariat.* The latest performance of this kind, in which ruler and ruled appear equally ridiculous, is the new German Empire of the Bismarck nation: here capitalists and workers are balanced against each other and equally cheated for the benefit of the impoverished Prussian cabbage junkers." [2]

In Africa there are times when there is a relative equilibrium between the main contending classes and strata, and none of them is strong enough to assume and exercise power. In such a situation it is easier for the army to assume power on the pretext that it is above the petty squabbles of the politicians.

Which Class to Support

In the final analysis, however, the fundamental interests of the ruling class can only be expressed through the state machinery and bureaucracy. It is through the skilful use of the state structures that a dominant class can project its own interests as those of society as a whole. All levels of political power excercised by a ruling class are embodied within the state and it is this which enables one class to impose its domination on others. Sooner or later the army officers exercising power have to decide which class interests to champion and support. We should not form conclusions on this or that army coup on the basis of their rhetoric and declarations, but on their results. As Woddis points out: "The results of what they do may strengthen capitalism, place new fetters on the people, involve new forms of corruption, create a growing gap between rich and poor, and increase the dependence of the country's economy on the big international monopolies."[3] Furthermore, we need to look well beyond the plotters themselves, to the concrete circumstances — internal, regional and international — giving rise to a coup. What were the factors that facilitated the success — or conversely the failure — of a coup attempt?

Over the past decade the armies in black Africa have grown in numerical strength and are eating up a larger slice of the national budgets. Many of them are equipped by imperialism with the most advanced and sophisticated weaponry. At the same time the armies absorb a large proportion of the skilled personnel available. There is thus fierce competition for this scarce resource between the civilian structures of the government, industries, political parties and the military.

Since so many governments on our continent fear a coup attempt, potential or perceived rivals are prevented by fair or foul means from developing a power base. Loyalty instead of competence becomes the litmus test, with ethnic favouritism a central element. This is another aspect of our colonial legacy since the colonisers usually set up local auxiliary armies drawing on only one or two ethnic or tribal groups. This factor has contributed the thorny problem of ridding the army of tribalism and ethnocentrism.

An army coup can pre-empt a revolution or lead to it. However in most cases it has represented a shift of political power from one group to another within the the old ruling circles. In almost every case the new incumbents accuse the old regime of nepotism, corruption, inefficiency and mismanagement.

But governments should be judged not by their promises but by their actions. A progressive regime may be characterised as one that takes a stand against imperialism, pursues a consistent struggle against feudalism for social progress and seeks democratically to involve the working people in the political life of the country. Under such a government — notwithstanding weaknesses and drawbacks — serious efforts are made to consolidate the national democratic revolution.

Every army in the world is to a greater or lesser extent political. Its involvement in open political activity varies according to concrete circumstances. Every army reflects the reality and contradictions of the society in which it operates. With reference to the military in Africa Woddis explains:

> "It is precisely because these officers come from a variety of classes and social strata, are subject to different and even counterposed concepts and policy-alternatives, are pushed and pulled by contending class forces, and seek in this complex and ever-changing society to safeguard their own position, protect their group interest, and serve an ill-defined and vaguely understood national aspiration, that the path they follow is so often tortuous. Understandably some officers side with reaction, some with progress, and others, just as frequently, move from one camp to another, and even back again to their first allegiance".[4]

Armies do not act and behave monolithically. That is why every coup is pregnant with a counter-coup. In addition to ethnic, class and political differences there are also cleavages between senior and junior officers. Ruth First points out:

> "Senior military commanders have tended to identify with the government in power and have substantial stakes in preserving the status quo. Younger officers have tended to identify with their generation in politics or the civil service; if that generation is critical of the political order, its representatives in uniform may employ arms to re-arrange the order itself. . . In Africa, every rank has had a turn at coup-making. Colonels and majors — the most competitive and frustrated career grades — are especially well placed, because colonels control the regiments, and majors the companies, and they are in touch with the men and have access to the army hardware."[5]

In our approach to the officers we should distinguish between class origin on the one hand and class function on the other. Individuals in the higher echelons of the state apparatus, whatever their social origin, can and do utilise their position to accumulate capital. The bureaucratic bourgeoisie has its origins amongst such individuals. They also accumulate capital through fraud, corruption and kick-backs from the CIA and the transnationals. On the other hand individuals and groups from the privileged class and strata can and do identify with the downtrodden masses.

Ethiopia

The experience of Ethiopia is instructive. Here revolutionary minded officers were able, after a complex and bloody confrontation, to assert their authority and take the country on the path of social renewal and revolutionary transformation. The revolutionary officers led by Haile Mengistu Mariam also conducted a sustained campaign to form a vanguard party based on the science of Marxism-Leninism. Today the Workers' Party of Ethiopia is beginning to carry out the functions of a leading political force. Over the past twelve years the revolutionary process in Ethiopia has enriched our understanding and practical knowledge of the complex and multi-faceted character of the national democratic revolution.

Like all revolutions the national liberation revolution proceeds mechanically along an uninterrrupted line of ascent. It develops in a zig-zag manner in which there are retreats and reverses occasioned by the massive counter-attack of imperialism, its local allies and incorrect policies and strategy followed by the ruling circles or revolutionary organisation. Every revolution, as the classics teach, gives birth to counter-revolutionary attempts. Marx once said, "the revolution made progress . . . by the creation of a powerful, united counter-revolution."[6] But even when the forces of national and social liberation in this or that area seem to be at a low ebb the struggle at a world level continues in one form or another, leading to major defeats for imperialism. This can be seen in the defeat of US and Zionist Israel's aggression in Lebanon, the defence of the revolutions in Nicaragua, Afghanistan, Kampuchea, Angola and Ethiopia, and the heightened armed and mass political struggles in El Salvador, Namibia and South Africa.

In his writings Lenin shows that "the passing of state power from one *class* to another is the first, the principal, the basic sign of a *revolution*, both in the strictly scientific and in the practical political meaning of that term."[7]

The active role and function of the working people is central to the vast range of problems connected with the seizure of power. The experience of successful revolutions and those that failed shows that there can be no real advance from the national democractic stage to the socialist one without the most active participation of the working masses in both the rural and urban areas in the economic and political life of the country. A socialist revolution demands that society should be fundamentally restructured to reflect accurately the new production relations.

Over the past decade writers such as Arrighi and Saul have arbitrarily divided the African working class into an upper stratum and a lower one. For them this "upper stratum" enjoys high salaries and allegedly lives like the middle class, and as a "labour aristocracy" is closer to the elite and sub-elite. But the place of the working class is objectively determined by its relation to the means of production. Its potential political and revolutionary role also derives from this source. The most crucial element from a theoretical and practical political perspective is that the revolutionary interests, aspirations and demands of the working class are more consistent, profound and universal in character than any other class or strata in society. In the course of the struggle the working class and its movement seeks and builds alliances with other classes and stata. Nor is it a question of numbers only, since a working class movement and Party are not only composed of the workers and certainly not only of the most downtrodden and poorest sections. In the final analysis it is class leadership that determines the pace, scope and depth of any revolution.

In tropical Africa the lack of a coherent, well-organised disciplined working class objectively and subjectively facilitates the leading role of the middle strata in the national democratic revolution. Moreover the question of working class leadership is rendered even more complex and difficult by widespread poverty and illiteracy and the absence at this stage of Communist and Workers' Parties in many countries.

In Africa a social revolution requires the closest unity in action of the working class, poor peasantry, agricultural labourers and the revolutionary wing of the middle strata. Those sections of the armed forces that seek a fundamental shift in the political and economic life of the country recognise that without the active participation of the working people at all levels of socio-political life, the prospect of building and defending a new society is illusory. Unfortunately there are still anti-imperialist army officers who harbour a paternal attitude to the working class. They view this most revolutionary class not as a central component of the revolution but as an auxiliary in the fight against imperialism and counter-revolution.

Since independence imperialism's stranglehold on the economies of countries in our continent has strengthened. Thus these countries are easily susceptible to the immense pressures exerted by imperialism, in particular US imperialism. The legacy of colonialism which reproduces itself under conditions of neo-colonialism cannot be wished away. US imperialism and its agency the IMF are exerting ever greater pressure on independent Africa to reduce the role of the state and give free rein to the transnational corporations and the so-called free play of the market forces. Using various economic levers including the transfer of technology, imperialism seeks to tie these countries even more closely to its coat tails. Imperialism fosters the growth of the parasitic and exploiting class in the form of the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, comprador bourgeoisie and even a feudal-plutocratic stratum. These local allies of imperialism are the main internal enemies of the people of Africa. Without their nefarious role imperialism could not pursue its policies nor ride rough-shod over the interests of the popular masses. The main content of the struggle in tropical Africa is against imperialist domination and control. This opens up great possibilities for the setting up of broad anti-imperialist alliances. The revolutionary forces have the possibility to translate the spontaneous anti-imperialist attitudes of the masses into concrete political action and into a material force.

Nigeria

The significant lesson to be drawn from the various coups in Nigeria is that basically they signalled the substitution of one group of officers by another without any fundamental shift in political orientation and direction. During 25 years of independence Nigeria has had six military and two civilian governments. The first coup led by Major General Ironsi in January 1966 toppled the government headed by Nnamdi Azikiwe. During his term of office the Ibos played an even more prominent role in the military and state apparatus. This upset the politicians, bureaucrats, military officers and businessmen of the North who saw it as an attack upon their economic, political and military weight and power. Six months later Ironsi was overthrown in a bloody coup led by officers and NCO's from the North. Out of more than 200 officers and soldiers killed 95 per cent were Ibos including Ironsi.

Soon after General Gowon assumed power, Nigeria was plunged into its deepest crisis by the Biafran seccessionist attempts inspired by Colonel Ojukwu. For three years a bloody civil war raged in that country. Ojukwu was backed by US imperialism, Portuguese fascism and racist South Africa. US imperialism then and now is hostile to any developments which would strengthen a united and progressive Nigeria. It gambled on the secessionists succeeding, thereby securing a base in one of the most important countries in Africa. Fortunately for Nigeria and our continent the secessionists were defeated. The civil war led to the rapid growth of the army. In 1960 the military comprised about 10,800 men with an expenditure of 22 million US dollars, but by the mid-70's it had expanded to about 250,000 men with an estimated expenditure of over one and a half billion dollars. At the present time, mainly due to the efforts of the Muhammed-Obasanjo governments, the army has about 120,000 men, with 4,000 in the navy and 9,000 in the air force.[8]

This rapid growth in personnel, equipment and combat experience gave the military far more clout than it previously possessed. The mid-70's was the period of the oil-boom and the inflow of extensive foreign capital. But the Gowon regime presided over the squandering of the valuable black gold, the strengthening of the local bourgeoisie and endemic corruption.

This intolerable situation could not last, and in 1975 Gowon was overthrown by General Murtala Muhammed. The coup was welcomed by the masses who yearned for a better life. In the short period of his rule Muhammed gave the impression of being honest and sincere in his attempts to resolve some of the most pressing problems confronting the people. His government sought to pursue a progressive foreign policy with strong support for the national liberation movements in Southern Africa and Guinea Bissau. Six months after assuming power he was assassinated. Many Nigerians still believe that he was a victim of an imperialist plot, inspired by fear of his progressive foreign policy. His successor General Obasanjo later handed over power to a civilian government in 1979.

However, so-called democratic rule between 1979 and 1983 was marked by gross inefficiency, massive corruption, political chicanery, fraudulent elections and huge profits for foreign monopoly capital. Not surprisingly the imperialist media suppressed this information. Nigeria under Shagari lurched from bad to worse. The crisis-ridden economy was dealt a severe blow by the drop in the price of crude oil. Corruption led to the flight of billions of dollars into foreign banks.

In the 4 years of Shagari rule the revenue from oil was about 60 billion US dollars. But this "hub of the filthiest Nigerian bourgeoisie" — a term coined by Nigerian journalists — turned that amount into a debt of 30 billion dollars. All in all it is estimated that the Shagari clique managed to squander approximately 130 billion dollars. At the same time food production was completely ignored and consequently parts of Nigeria still face a near famine situation.

It was clear that the corrupt and fraudulently elected Shagari had to be removed. Thus the people of Nigeria welcomed the Buhari coup of December 1983 which ousted the Shagari clique. It is widely believed both inside and outside Nigeria that the Buhari coup pre-empted a coup by more militant and radical younger officers, who may have opted for a fundamental shift in the economic and political life of the country.

The masses who took to the streets to welcome the coup were soon disappointed. The Buhari regime palpably failed to deal with the grave economic predicament, with the high rate of unemployment, food shortages, decline in agricultural production, the deterioration of the health service and the educational system. Corruption was rampant and the economy was mismanaged. Moreover the hard-won democratic and trade union rights of the workers, state employees, peasants and the mass media were fiercely attacked. The Pilots' Association, the Nigerian Medical Association, the Nigerian Association of Resident Doctors and the National Association of Nigerian Students were all banned. The Nigerian Labour Congress (NLC) was harassed and some of its moderate leaders so intimidated that for a time there was an absence of effective mass protest at the alarming growth of retrenchment and unemployment. Towards the end of his mis-rule Buhari banned all political activity and debate and threatened all and sundry with arrest under the Detention of Persons Decree.

With Foresight

A month before the Babangida coup the Nigerian Marxist journal *New Horizon* wrote:

> "There is hunger in the land, there is suffering in the land. Hunger and suffering bitterly attack the people but the hardest hit are those who have been purged and retrenched. They are numbered in hundreds of thousands. Because statistics can

> also be classified as one of the essential commodities in Nigeria we can only stand by the conjecture of the Nigeria Labour Congress — and that body is supposed to know because it caters for organised workers of Nigeria — that almost five million people have lost their jobs since retrenchment and purge began. This administration has, more than any one before it, been held responsible by the people for this unprecedented predicament.
>
> But the biggest headache of the helpless people is the avalanche of LEVIES. All sorts of levies: levies on this, levies on that, levies for this, levies for that are being imposed on helpless Nigerians. There is the cattle levy, there is education levy, there is road levy, there is health levy. Levies apart, there are taxes of all sorts and also all state governments, local councils are launching one fund or the other. The people are heavily taxed. The question now is: for how long will the people continue to suffer?
>
> The people are suffering while the transnationals are reaping murderous profits. Since the people are daily being retrenched and purged while the companies are harvesting bumper profits does it not make more social and economic sense if the levies were directed to the companies rather than retrenched workers and poor peasants?
>
> Levies and taxes will continue to be raised and the people marginalised and the government frustrated while the transnationals will be making millions of naira profit . . . until a political process whereby the people are taken into account is evolved.
>
> Vote for Socialism!"[9]

Buhari held long negotiations with the IMF and was prepared to accept most of the onerous conditions imposed by that instrument of imperialism and international monopoly capital. But three conditions were unacceptable: the extent of the devaluation of the naira, trade liberalisation and the removal of petroleum subsidies. Unhappy at the stalling tactics adopted by Buhari, and stirred by rumours of an impending coup by younger officers, British and US imperialism welcomed the Babangida coup.

Following the August 1985 coup the Babangida regime seemed willing to accede to the onerous conditions demanded by the IMF. But there was now a changed political atmosphere. The progressive forces in the trade unions, universities, schools, media and in the army began to mobilise the masses against this international conspiracy, with the result that the regime was compelled to initiate an open public debate on the question. For months the IMF debate dominated the Nigerian political scene. Astonishingly under a military regime, the most open, fierce and wide-ranging discussion took place. Trade union leaders spoke out on every forum, students were active in every university and polytechnic and some leading army officers came out against their own High Command. In this debate the Nigerian Marxists played a prominent role. Through the *New Horizon,* trade unions and public forums they helped to mobilise and organise the anti-IMF constituency. The upshot of this feverish debate was that in December 1985 Babangida announced that the popular verdict was "NO TO THE IMF". The debate and the political mobilisation and organisation that it spawned has important lessons for revolutionaries everywhere. Firstly, even under the most adverse conditions it is possible to organise the masses. Secondly, that once an opportunity or even the smallest opening is offered the progressive and revolutionary forces should utilise it to the full. Thirdly, that through mass pressure it is possible to compel even a military regime to retreat. And above all the power of the organised and mobilised working people is of paramount significance. In the case of Nigeria it is important to note that the NLC has some 5 million members organised in various trade unions.

The anti-IMF consensus has the potential to develop into an anti-imperialist consensus. It seems likely that the next great debate will be around the question — What road for Nigeria? If this debate does take off then three possible tendencies could emerge. 1) That the capitalist way of development is still the best; 2) that socialist orientation is the answer; and 3) that if bourgeois democracy is to be killed then all "foreign" ideologies should be shunned and a specific African solution should be found.

Dapo Fatogun, editor-in-chief of the *New Horizon,* is confident that "the popular masses will be seen to vote for a socialist system of government." Commenting on the ongoing debate he wrote: "The popular masses want a socialist system. One of the placards at last year's May Day rally repeated the now popular demand on the lips of workers, market women, youth and students. The May Day placard said, 'We tried the British system and it broke us. We tried the American system and it collapsed our econony, why not try the Russian system'."[10]

Nigeria seethes with political discontent. On May 23 a student demonstration at the Ahmadu Bello University, held to mark the 8th anniversary of the killing of 8 ABU students, was forcibly broken up by the police and a number of students were killed. A week later students of Daduna Polytechnic protesting the last killings were also attacked and some students lost their lives. The police actions led to a wave of strikes at many post-secondary institutions. The Nigerian Labour Congress condemned the killings and scheduled a march for June 4. This march was banned and many trade unionists including leading officials of the NLC were arrested.

In Nigeria as anywhere else in the world a military coup from "democracy" to military rule or the replacement of one set of officers by another cannot eliminate the relations of exploitation between capital and labour inherent in any capitalist society. The fluid nature and character of the Nigerian bourgeoisie makes it more difficult to analyse which fraction of the bourgeoisie benefits most from a specific coup. In general the Nigerian economy is dominated by the middlemen, large traders, civil servants connected to the money makers and international monopoly capital especially that connected with the oil industry. After Obasanjo had handed over power to Shagari a number of leading military personnel went in for large scale commercial farming. This group is popularly known as the "gentlemen farmers" and they still exercise some influence.

In December 1985 an attempted coup was crushed. 10 of the coup plotters, including General Mamman Vatsa, a former cabinet minister and member of the Armed Forces Ruling Council, were later executed. It is alleged that the plotters were supporters of the deposed Buhari. It is interesting to note that after the ousting of Buhari, those closely connected to him still held influential positions in the armed forces. Some commentators argued that immediately following the Babangida coup there was a relative balance of power between the supporters of Buhari and those of Babangida. This forced Babangida to rely on the support of the radical younger officers. These younger officers may not remain satisfied if the new military regime does not take serious steps to improve the economy and stand up to the dictates of imperialism and both foreign and local big capital. At the same time imperialism and its agencies such as the CIA are working feverishly, overtly and covertly, to undermine the influence of the progressive and revolutionary forces. For they fully recognise that a radical transformation in Nigeria would have immense repercussions well beyond our continent.

US imperialism strongly disapproves of Nigeria's progressive position on South Africa. In March this year comrade Tambo paid an official visit to Nigeria where he met leading government officials including President Babangida, workers' representatives at the NLC headquarters and anti-apartheid activists. At all the meetings and discussions militant solidarity was expressed with the fighting people of South Africa and their leading organisation the ANC.

The urgent need to resolve the most basic problems facing the people of Africa dominates the thinking and work of the progressive and revolutionary forces of our continent. There are no easy solutions. Overcoming the disastrous inherited colonial legacy and the various mechanisms of control and domination exercised by imperialism and international monopoly capital requires above all the unity in action of all the anti-imperialist forces, and policies and strategies that would increase the involvement and serve the interests of the working people. In Africa — which contains most of the poorest countries in the world — capitalism, or to use the modern jargon "capitalist modernisation" reproduces poverty. The forces for change may be wide and all-embracing but the working class, peasantry and their revolutionary organisations must play a central role.

The experience of Ethiopia demonstrates that it is possible for revolutionary army officers to initiate profound changes.

But for these changes to be permanent requires the active participation and leadership of the working people, and the development of the closest mutually beneficial relations with the Soviet Union and the other Socialist countries. Neither in individual countries nor on a world scale is it possible to stand up to imperialist diktat without the closest cooperation with the countries of the socialist community.

Notes

1) R. First, *The Barrel of a Gun,* Harmondsworth, 1972, p.411.
2) Quoted in J. Woddis, *Armies and Politics,* London, 1977, pp.38-39.
3) Ibid., p.43.
4) Ibid., pp.81-82.
5) R. First, op cit., p.19 and p.437.
6) K. Marx and F. Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. 10, p.47.
7) V.I. Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol.24, p.44.
8) *West Africa,* 30 September, 1985.
10) Ibid., Vol.6, No.2, February, 1986.

A Tribute to Comrade Alex La Guma, who died in Havana on October 11, 1985

CULTURE, THE ARTIST AND LIBERATION

By Comrade Mzala

In a private discussion with Cosmo Pieterse[1] while I was passing through Dar es Salaam in August, 1985, I gathered that as far as he was concerned, Alex La Guma, thus far, had made the greatest mark in the history of revolutionary literature in South Africa (La Guma had not yet died when these remarks were made). Other writers or literary critics may possibly differ with this opinion. After all, controversies about the extent of an artist's greatness are not new to our age. Voltaire used to call Shakespeare a drunken savage,[2] whereas both Marx and Engels chose Shakespeare as their favourite dramatist,[3] and thought him to be one of the greatest poets (besides Aeschylus and Goethe) that mankind has ever produced.

In this article I should like to discuss the premises from which a scientific revolutionary must move when evaluating culture, art and the role of the artist in the struggle for liberation.

The premise of bourgeois sociology and that of its aesthetics in particular starts with the existence of culture and artistic creation in the minds of human beings, and equally ends with its cultural expression in education, music, poetry, sculpture, theatre, painting, cinema, sport and so on. This standpoint does not explain to us where culture comes from, what factors determine its evolution and revolution. This school of aesthetics takes for granted what it is supposed to explain; it takes the very subject matter of "Culture and Art" to be its own ultimate cause.

Karl Marx in *The German Ideology* asserted that the mode of production of material life conditions the social, political and intellectual life process in general. It would be misleading to assess the aesthetic value of any creation of art by some abstract theory of art established as a doctrine at one time or another by a certain Aristotle or some other theoretician, because such a method would be ignoring, firstly, the social basis from which all art develops, and secondly, the fact that works of art correspond to each historical period.

What do these two conditions mean? The first establishes that all cultural and artistic productions are to be assessed not in fantastic isolation from reality, since art falls within the cultural branch of social activity. The second condition establishes a historical method of analysis — that different historical periods have different and particular aesthetic ideals corresponding to their respective social conditions. For example, it cannot be expected of Alex La Guma's short stories that they should repeat the characteristics of Diderot or Gorky. Art content and form change with the ever-changing material world.

Engels, who displayed particular interest in those sciences that investigated the transition from ape to man, wrote that it is labour that has "given the human hand the high degree of perfection required to conjure into being the pictures of a Raphael, the statues of a Thorwaldsen, the music of a Paganini."[4] By pointing to the role of labour, Engels was emphasizing the view that artistic ability is *also* a socially acquired quality, not *only* an inborn talent.

It is this labour that is the primary life activity of man, which produces giant productive machines, great sculpture, music, etc. Man's life activity is distinguished from animal life activity by conscious labour, a faculty that is absent in spiders or birds when they build their webs or nests. Culture in itself represents a specific form of labour. That is why one is a painter, actor or poet, by coming into active and practical contact with nature or society.

It is a false concept that cultural workers are independent of the general social life of the working people, a concept that is vulgarised by the millionaires in the United States when they build special suburbs in Hollywood for actors and actresses "far from the madding crowd".

Culture and Class Society

In a class divided society, the class that owns the means of production, the class that hires the labour of others to produce wealth (both material and spiritual), subjects all products of labour to its own ends. A ruling class is equally a ruling intellectual force in society; the ideas of the ruling class are equally the ruling ideas. These ruling ideas, argued Marx in 1846, "are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas". How true indeed! When one reads history, one notes how painters and sculptors were required to paint the king's family and dinner parties or make a bust of the heir to the throne.

Classical art in Egypt, Mesopotamia and Rome reveals that with the division between the producers and the organisers of production, cultural productions were used in the service of the custodians of the means of production, who, in time, used the authority derived from the nature of their task to concentrate the surplus in their own hands, and thereby became the owners. Looking at the classical English drama as well (take for example, Shakespeare's *Macbeth*), the whole focus is on the rivalry among the nobles — the drama is called a "tragedy" precisely because someone of a high social rank has met a fall or misfortune. The death of peasants and serfs was not considered to be a "tragedy".

In so far as the bourgeoisie rule as a class in modern society, it is self-evident that culture here too is exploited in the interests of the capitalists. Today the monopoly capitalists own giant industries of cultural production, they own most of the book publishing houses and music industries, they regulate the production and distribution of most cultural products. In a colonial society like South Africa, despite the resistant presence of a people's culture, the culture of the oppressed is dominated, exploited and most often grotesquely distorted by the apartheid ruling class.

A Greek composer, Mikis Theodorakis, splendidly summed up the class interests of the bourgeoisie in the sphere of culture when he said:

> "The ruling bourgeoisie is trying continuously to keep down the cultural level of the masses and to degrade aesthetic and artistic values, art itself and the artist."[5]

How does the capitalist society degrade art itself and the artist?

Capitalism vs. the People

Before the advent of colonialism in South Africa, and likewise before the introduction at a later stage of the capitalist mode of production, the African peoples enjoyed poetry and music, they sculptured pottery and danced freely, all by themselves and for themselves. For them poetry had nothing to do with books; yet when a young man saw his bull of choice among the herd of cattle, he recited poetry, which was the medium for expressing appreciation. The same applied to music and dance. Although there were professional poets and musicians (that is, those that were recognised as more talented in performance), no sharp line could be drawn between artists and the rest of the community. There was always a participatory relationship between the people and the artists, who also knew that they existed in order to serve the people.

In a social system of private wealth such as obtains in South Africa, cultural expression has changed its original character and purpose; it now has to satisfy primarily the profit motive of economic life. As with every other commodity in the capitalist economy, cultural products also pass through three stages: production, marketing and consumption. Whatever does not neatly fit into this economic pattern whatever does not humbly place its head on the altar of the system, does not stand a chance of winning appreciation from the vast masses of the people. Thus lamented Simon Frith:

> "Folk culture is created directly and spontaneously out of communal experience; it is the culture of the working classes, it expresses the common experience of work; there is no distance between folk artist and audience, no separation between folk production and consumption ... this form of popular creativity has been destroyed by the means and relations of artistic production under capitalism. Cultural products are now produced and sold for profit and the consequent processes of taste manipulation and artistic exploitation have been made possible by the recording techniques which enable culture to be mass produced and individually consumed."[6]

In this way the connection between universal culture and the mass of the people is destroyed. What is more, culture and man are posed against each other, meeting as alien forces in the market-place. In this way a cultural chasm is also created between the artists and the people. We have often heard bourgeois propagandists telling the artists that the so-called ordinary people have no culture, that they cannot appreciate art, that art is strictly for an "elite" (the artists) and not "the mob" (the people). This division is best articulated in the philosophical works of Nietzsche.

Belief then is created that this "mob" needs only cheap entertainment — e.g. discos with the cheapest pop music that appeals to the basest sentiments (it is typical of a disco song to go on for minutes without end repeating one and the same phrase like: "Baby c'mon, put your back against the wall"). Disco music, with its lack of relevant content, is meant to dull the sensitivity of the youth to the nature of exploitation, it is meant to divert their sense of social responsibility; the music industry seeks to create men and women who are passive victims of imperialist culture, whose minds can be manipulated at will by advertisement, whose cultural ideal is Lee jeans, Florscheim shoes or Monaco shirts. Obviously, such disco music cares more about being a medium of advertisement than being artistic expression. That is why its symbol is John Travolta in "Saturday Night Fever" wearing a cream-white Pierre Cardin three-piece suit and not Phillip Tabane of the Malombo wearing an old Dashiki Afro-shirt playing Venda songs on an acoustic guitar at Jabulani Amphitheatre. Said Hugh Masekela during a tour of Lesotho with Miriam Makeba:

> "...the only thing disco is all about is love. I love you baby. We'll boogie all night ... Do it to me three times ... Do it to me tonight. Now you are trapped, man. Disco is a social tranquillizer. You don't recognise other things. Gentlemen, we can't boogie for the whole year!"[75]

Let us allow ourselves a little digression. Some people (particularly the disco enthusiasts) justify discos as "entertainment". What is entertainment? Is the concept of entertainment separate from the real society? Can it be confirmed to the sensuous rhythms of Lionel Ritchie as he screams: "Life is good, life is sweet ... Let the music take control"? Does art have a purely "entertaining" value, without a social function? What conduct, habits, morals or way of life is prescribed by such "entertainment"? Does not such "entertainment" become the opium of the masses of young people?

I think it does. Therefore let us place disco music next to its other partners: *Playboy* magazine, drug addiction, vulgar film shows from Hollywood which glorify brothels and casinos. For the South African people, we reserve revolutionary culture, we proceed from the reality of our oppressive situation, and repeat after the poet Anon:

> "There shall be no love songs
> In South Africa this year
> For love emanates from the heart
> And in Cape Town there are no hearts of love.
> Only malignant coronaries which transmit the
> Warped brains of racists to bleed upon the
> Tortured bodies of oppressed blacks.
> There shall be no love songs
> To lull minds of black children to
> Dream of beautiful fantasies or soft
> Harmonious nights. The blood of black
> Patriots still covers the soil of
> Johannesburg with yesterday's sadness.
> No songs to comfort the poor who die
> From malnutrition and are buried in
> Black graves without markers"[8]

A poet in present-day South Africa who can feel and say nothing except "Roses, what beautiful flowers you are!" has no right to think himself superior to an ordinary moron. Am I being harsh? Pardon me, for I know of no pain that has more right to speak out in face of the beauty of nature than the sorrow of oppression!

Capitalism vs. the Artist

Up till now we have been considering the alienation of culture from the people in general; now let us look at the cultural worker's relationship with the product of his labour in capitalist society.

Under capitalist economic conditions, the cultural realisation of the artist becomes the loss of realisation for the artist. The artist becomes a slave of his own product, and the height of this slavery often becomes starvation and even death. It may sound incredible, but such is the pathetic life of Barney Rachabane, Mankunku Ngozi or Kiepie Moeketsi. Kiepie is described by Hugh Masekela as "among the most brilliant musicians we've ever had". Kiepie became famous as a saxophonist as early as the 1940's, playing in the slums of Sophiatown with groups like Harlem Swingsters, the Shantytown Sextet, the Manhattan Brothers, etc. He was later joined by and helped develop such renowned musicians as Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Jonas Gwangwa and Hugh Masekela. Together with Todd Matshikiza, Miriam Makeba and others, he joined the cast of the original "King Kong" and went on a tour outside South Africa. Most of his colleagues did not come back to South Africa, but Kiepie returned to experience the exploitation of his talent by the music industry. Writing a tribute to Kiepie on the pages of *Sechaba*, Comrade Gazelle captured his predicament with the following revealing words: "The South African recording companies had made thousands of rands from Kiepie Moeketsie's music, but he had nothing. He died in poverty in 1982. He had no money, no work, and no house".[9] Kiepie died a frustrated man.

All these consequences are a confirmation of the famous aphorism uttered by Karl Marx that the worker in a class divided society is related to the product of his labour as to an alien object. Marx saw this paradox as early as 1844 when he said that the more the worker produces, the less he has to consume; the more value he creates, the more unworthy he becomes; the better formed his product, the more deformed becomes the worker. His reasoning was quite consistent. If the work of the art — music, poems, paintings, that is, the product of the artist's labour — is alien to the artist, if it is controlled and manipulated independently of the artist, if it is under the domination of another man, to whom then does that art piece belong? Who is this stranger in the domain of the artist's labour? Whence comes his power to devalue the artist, to reduce the artist to servitude? The answer again was given by Karl Marx, who argued that "private property is thus the product, the result, the necessary consequence, of alienated labour, of the external relation of the worker to nature and to himself ... wages are a direct consequence of estranged labour, and estranged labour is the direct cause of private property."[10]

Realism in Art

It has often been said that the main aesthetic problem is the question of the realtionship between art and reality. "Realism", said Engels, "implies, besides truth of detail, the truthful reproduction of typical characters under typical circumstances".

Realism in South African art is necessarily reflected in the works that identify the oppression of the black people and the exploitation of the working class. Revolutionary art is born of the struggle of the people for self-emancipation, to achieve a new society. Great artists in all ages, from Aeschylus to Neruda, from Brecht to Neto, have revealed through their works the essence of the reality surrounding them. Literature in every historical epoch also reveals people's relations in society as the struggle between classes for the means of life goes on. Lukács maintained that the purpose of realism in literature is "to locate those human qualities which make for the creation of a new social order."[12] Equally, Bertolt Brecht demanded that such art must provoke pleasure at the possibility of society's mastering man's fate, that it must lay bare the dialectical laws of movement of the social mechanism, whose revelation makes the mastering of man's fate easier. Characters and events should be shown as historical, as in motion, as alterable, as contradictory,[13] because everything changes except the law of change.

This means that the artist's first duty is to know and understand the people well, the artist must be capable of "watching the people's mouth"[14] — to use a phrase that had special value for Brecht. Those writers who are withdrawn from people's daily life will most obviously be unfamiliar with the people's language and emotions, and their works will be full of awkward expressions which are opposed to popular usage. Here is an obvious conclusion: realism (say, in the field of literature) means literature written from the point of view of the politically conscious people, also from the point of view of the class conscious workers, whose standpoint and social consciousness reveals the world in change for the better, an optimistic and partisan social outlook.

Alex La Guma's success in literature lies precisely in the combination of his skilful use of language and the artistic creations that are subordinated to the struggle of the people for liberation. Realism was the distinctive feature of La Guma's style. When one reads his works like *In the Fog of the Seasons End, Time of the Butcherbird*, and others (whatever their other limitations), one realises that his artistic imagery did not stand over and above actual South African reality.

Sigmund Freud failed to grasp this interconnection between artistic creation and reality — despite his otherwise worthwhile contributions in the field of psychiatry. He wrote that "art does not aspire to be anything but illusion, (it) does not venture to trespass into reality."[15] Those who reason like Freud end up arguing that there is "pure" art, or that there is "art for art's sake". Or that everything in art is created solely from mental imagination and does not necessarily relate to reality. We still have to be convinced of course that our "pure" artist is not conscious of the world in which he lives, and that his sense organs do not feed him with information and knowledge on the basis of which he then creates his mental images. Such theories are meant to isolate the artist from objective reality, so that the artist locks himself up in the ephemeral 'ivory tower', devoted to sterile and irrelevant artistic productions, thus limiting the sphere of the artist's talents to sheer ambition. Such an artist is not where he or she is needed, where his or her pen, chisel or musical instrument is needed by the people.

Art is an important weapon in the struggle, it either reinforces or undermines the powers of the oppressor. Because of its essential social nature, all art is influenced by class contradictions and the ideology of a particular class. In fact, when one looks closer at the attitude of the art work that seems irrelevant to social reality, it becomes quite clear that its very indifference demonstrates acceptance of the prevailing social circumstances. Engels did not mince words on this question; when in April 1888, he received a copy of Miss Margaret Harkness's novel *City Girl* (sent to him by the author), he wrote in a letter to the author "...the rebellious reaction of the working class against the oppressive medium which surrounds them, their attempt — convulsive, half-conscious or conscious — at recovering their status as human beings, belongs to history and must therefore lay claim to a place in the domain of realism".

Shakespeare, Goethe, Balzac, Dickens and other classical writers have made their works of art immortal precisely because they were partisan writers; with great artistic power they condemned vice, exploitation and oppression. Karl Marx said that their "eloquent pages have issued to the world more political and social truths than have been attained by all professional politicians, publicists and moralists put together."[16] Also, the real reason that lies behind the outstanding characteristics of the painters, poets, sculptors or musicians of genius during the Renaissance — a time which called for giants and produced giants like Leonardo da Vinci, Albrecht Dürer, Luther, Machiavelli, Dante — the period of the flowering of outstanding works of art, some of whose classic and magnificent achievements remain unequalled by present day development despite its many advantages in the level of productive forces, is to be traced, in the opinion of Engels, to the fact that

> "they almost all live and pursue their activities in the midst of the contemporary movements, in the practical struggle; they take sides and join in the fight, one by speaking and writing, another with the sword, many with both. Hence the fullness and force of character that makes them complete men."[17]

This is exactly what we expect from the modern progressive artists. It is this trait alone — partisanship as an aspect of realism — that lifts the artist above the armchair of his narrow profession, from the restricting effects which produce the one-sidedness which has become so prevalent in the bourgeois countries.

Offering No Solutions

When one studies the plays of Athol Fugard, this element of popular realism is missing in them. Take for example *Sizwe Banzi Is Dead* and *Island* — both plays are a critical examination of the people's experience under apartheid, yet they both leave the audience ignorant as to how the question is to be solved. *Island* is even insulting to the prestige of the political prisoners on Robben Island (and now also Pollsmoor) which it is supposed to portray. Mandela and his colleagues definitely have no regrets for their political beliefs and conduct, unlike the two characters in this play, one of whom keeps on trying to phone his wife outside prison by means of a prison tea cup. The greater part of the life of this prisoner is occupied by thoughts of his wife outside. These plays show a pitiful image of the oppressed, who are shown as passive sufferers who at best deserve only sympathy. This artistic approach stifles man's vigour and creativity, arrests his revolutionary energy and drowns his mind in the sea of pessimism.

Another interesting South African artist to study in this regard is Gibson Kente, the producer of *Sikalo, Lifa, Zwi, How Long, I Believe, Too Late, Survival* and other plays. Gibson Kente, undeniably, is a master of urban African theatre, gifted composer of song and drama. Kente is wonderfully good at presenting the insulting essence of life under apartheid, the hostility between the policeman and worker ... yet he avoids imagining what it might be for the oppressed man to rise and control the means of political power. Like Athol Fugard, in a way, his people figure as a passive mass, unable to help themselves except by constant prayer, and not even making any attempt to help themselves. Let us take *Too Late* for instance: having gone through a catalogue of oppressive conditions in South Africa, the play ends with an anti-climax, with a real "moderate" conclusion. Says Dr Phuza to the policeman, Pelepele:

> "Leaving the law for now, I am afraid unless something is done about this pettiness, the law is going to end up with a hot potato in its hands. Can't something be done to curb the bitterness in both young and old before it's TOO LATE?"

Mfundisi is even more revealing when he says:

> "Let us ask ourselves these burning questions. Can any force stop the prevailing bitterness in youth like Saduva? When even ordinary workers and labourers can organise massive strikes without influence or leadership? Are these not clever and vivid signs of saturation? That boy will never be the same again. Can't the powers that be do something?"[5]

This play was written under the influence of the 1973 Natal workers' strikes, when the oppressed and exploited workers in South Africa were beginning to take their fate into their own hands. But Kente fears the organised character of the workers' actions, for him it is not the people but the "powers that be" who must change the situation, who must come with the solution. Anyway, as far as we can understand Kente, all that needs to be changed in South Africa is the "pettiness": the pass laws and race discrimination in public buildings and areas. He certainly does not envisage the fundamental transformation of South African society as envisaged by the Freedom Charter for example. In Kente's SouthAfrica the masses of the people stand on the sidelines of the struggle. This dangerous opinion is clearly attributable to the author's own class position in the Black community — it is the dilemma inherent in Kente the artist and Kente the businessman. Robert Mshengu Kavanagh informs us that by the early 1970's Kente's "theatrical organisation employed up to three large companies of actors, actresses, musicians, an administrative and technical staff, drivers, advertisers and others ... In 1971, when his fortunes were at a comparatively low ebb, he was able to offer his wife a managerial position in his own organisation with a salary of R500 a month."[18]

Maybe we are being a bit harsh on Kente; probably the absence of solutions in his plays also reflects the fear of the security police and the Censorship Board. Nadine Gordimer will most probably plead on Kente's behalf: "Aren't there all sorts of other influences that invisibly hold back his arm? Has he, as a human being in a particular time and situation, always the freedom of his talent?"[19]

Probably. In South African conditions, the literary critic should not forget, there are certain realities like restrictions on artists. We have seen the SABC stop the broadcast of simple songs like "Have you ever seen the rain?" because "rain" was thought to be a reference to "revolution". Also John Lennon's famous record "Imagine" was banned in all the African broadcasting services because it was thought to be introducing communism via the backdoor. When Muff Anderson at one time interviewed Joseph Shabalala, the leader of the Black Mambazo musical group from Ladysmith, as to why their lyrics were restricted to religious and love themes, Shabalala replied: "We keep the radio in mind when we compose. If something is contentious they don't play it, and then it wouldn't be known to the public anyway." Hence the only kind of songs the bosses at Auckland Park can tolerate are those innocent and banal songs like "Izimkomo Zikababa" ("My Father's Cows").

Must the Artist Bow to the Censor?

Should the censor then be the final judge over art creation? Does the fear of the censor's scissors justify the way some artists in our country have written, sung or painted as they have? How can an artist remain committed and relevant when there are so many constraints, when he is subject to so much harassment by the authorities? In South Africa the dilemma facing the artist is that the same social and political factors which awaken the artist's sense of commitment are the very ones which conspire against his producing committed art.

Maybe the answer to this dilemma lies in the words of Engels, criticising Minna Kautsky's novel *Die Alten und die Neuen* (The Old Ones and the New). In a letter written to the author (London, November 26, 1885) Engels said: "I am by no means opposed to partisan poetry as such. Both Aeschylus, the father of tragedy, and Aristophanes, the father of comedy, were highly partisan poets ... I think however that the purpose must become manifest from the situation and the action themselves without being expressly pointed out and that the author does not have to serve the reader on a platter the future historical revolution of the social conflicts which he describes".

What does this mean? It means that realism, while being faithful to real conditions, does not bind the artist to offer obvious and direct solutions of the problems involved. An artist need not even *ostensibly* take sides. I emphasize *ostensibly*. The artist, who stands a far better chance than a politician in a totalitarian state, should use his talents and skills to express the aspirations of the oppressed. A work of art, unlike a speech, can express ideas, values and policies in an implicit and concealed way. It seems to me that, in fact, the greatest impact made by an art work is when it influences the feelings and the imagination of the recipient without his being conscious of it. A good poem is not a series of good slogans, and neither is a splendid piece of prose a political speech. Naked, crude and overt purpose in art actually denies the work its aesthetic value, and sometimes goes even further to arouse prejudices and suspicion.

Footnotes:

1. Cosmo Pieterse is a noted South African poet and dramatist, at present living in the United States where he is a senior lecturer in Art at one of the US universities. When he met the author in Dar es Salaam, he had come to run an Art and Theatre workshop at SOMAFCO in Morogoro, Tanzania.
2. In the preface to the tragedy *Semirame* (1748), entitled "Disquisitions on the Ancient and Modern Tragedy", Voltaire wrote the following about Shakespeare's *Hamlet*: "One would think this work was created by the fantasy of a drunken savage. But amid these crude violations of form, which even now make the English theatre so absurd and barbarous, one finds in Hamlet, besides its still greater perculiarities, lofty thoughts worthy of a real genius".
3. *Reminiscences of Marx and Engels,* Moscow, 1956, p.266.
4. F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature,* Moscow, 1974, pp. 171-172.
5. Mikis Theodorakis, *Marxist Review,* No. 1, 1984.
6. Simon Frith, quoted by Muff Anderson, *Music in the Mix,* Johannesburg, 1981, p. 17.
7. Hugh Masekela in an interview published by *Staffrider,* April/May, 1981, p.33.
8. Anon, quoted from *Forward,* the ANC Youth Journal, No. 13, 1984.
9. *Sechaba,* March issue, 1985.
10. K. Marx, *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844,* Moscow, 1977, p.78-79.
11. F. Engels, letter to Marx — in *Marx and Engels, Selected Correspondence,* Moscow, 1975, p. 379.
12. George Lukács, "The Meaning of Contemporary Realism" — quoted from *Marxists on Literature, An Anthology,* edited by Dr David Craig, Penguin Books, p.12.
13. See "Brecht on Theatre", article by John Willet, *Marxists on Literature,* op cit., p. 13.
14. Bertolt Brecht, "On Rhymeless Verse with Irregular Rhythms", ibid., pp. 429-34.
15. *Sigmund Freud, Gesamelte Werke,* London, 1946 — quoted from A. Zis, *Foundations of Marxist Aesthetics,* Moscow, 1977, p. 33.
16. K. Marx, "The English Middle Class", in *Marx and Engels, Articles on Britain,* Moscow, 1971, p.218.
17. F. Engels, *Dialectics of Nature,* op. cit., p.22.
18. Robert Mshengu Kavanagh, *South African People's Plays,* London, 1981.
19. Nadine Gordimer, "The Novel and the Nation in South Africa", article written in 1961, quoted from *African Writers on African Writers,* edited by G.D. Killam, London, 1978, p.33.
20. F. Engels — *Marx and Engels On Literature and Art,* Moscow, 1978, p.88.

AFRICA NOTES AND COMMENT

By Ahmed Azad

AFRICA'S PLIGHT: THE UN SPECIAL SESSION

At the request of the OAU the UN Special Session on the Critical Economic Situation in Africa was held at the UN headquarters at the end of May 1986. The convening of the special session — the first of its kind in the history of the UN — is a tribute to the united and persevering efforts of the OAU. After much discussion and arm twisting from the imperialist world a UN Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery 1986-1990 was adopted. This programme differs in important respects from the Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990 prepared by the OAU and Economic Commission for Africa.

In its programme the OAU calls for radical transformation of agriculture, structural reforms and more diversified and regionally integrated economies. Special attention is paid to improving the level of productive forces including human resources, the production of food, stable commodity agreements, equitable prices for raw materials and a just solution to the debt crisis. The drastic fall in commodity prices — which are determined in the main centres of the capitalist world — has had a catastrophic effect on the African economies. It is estimated that between 1980-1983, due to the fall in commodity prices, African countries lost about 13.5 billion dollars in foreign exchange. This loss is even more damaging when one takes into account that Africa's foreign debt has grown from 12 billion dollars in 1972 to 170 billion dollars in 1985, with debt repayment swallowing up to 17 billion dollars a year. But due to the intransigence of the imperialist countries the UN document does not adequately deal with these vital life and death issues.

The UN Programme for Action has two main elements: the determination of African countries to have economic programmes as reflected in the OAU

Priority Programme and the response of the international community to "support and complement the African development effort." The full implementation of the African Priority Programme would require 128.1 billion dollars, of which the African countries are committed to providing 82.5 billion dollars or 64.4 per cent.

Destabilisation

The UN document stresses the severe "adverse consequences" of the economic destabilisation of racist South Africa and the illegal occupation of Namibia on the already critical economic situation of the African countries. The questions of agriculture and the related issue of food production occupy a central place in the document. African countries are called upon to "increase substantially productivity in all sectors particularly in the central sectors of food and agriculture". In relation to agricultural development the African countries are committed to: taking immediate measures to combat food emergencies, medium term measures to raise the level of investments, increase food production, offer remunerative pricing policies and incentive schemes, develop livestock industry, mechanisation, storage facilities and research, provide necessary inputs for increased yields, ensure better utilisation of water resourcces, establish reafforestation, drought and desertification control programmes, give assistance to small farmers especially women and improve the distribution of agricultural products. The total investment required for implementation of this programme is 57.4 billion dollars.

Other aspects highlighted are: 1) Rehabilitation and development of agro related industries; 2) Development of transport and Communications, and 3) Trade and Finance.

Under pressure from the West the UN document fails to point out that it is the imperialist powers that are mainly responsible for the decline in commodity prices, adverse terms of trade and high interest rates. Furthermore on the issue of the massive debt the document is weak and shallow. Instead of responding with positive concrete measures to the demands of the African countries for a substantial relief of the debt burden, the document, echoing the wishes of the West, blandly states:

"The international community recognises the magnitude of Africa's debt and the severe and restrictive burden which this has placed on many African countries . . . In addressing problems arising from such debt, existing mechanisms should respond flexibly and be improved as appropriate."

Only two developed capitalist countries, Holland and Canada, undertook to implement some concrete relief measures. The former has promised to cancel all Official Development Assistance debt service on loans for those low income countries which undertake "reform" and the latter has offered a moratorium on all debt payments for five years.

On the vital question of African exports and access to markets, the UN document merely calls for "the adoption of measures which encourage African exports and diversification programmes, and improved market access especially for tropical products within the framework of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. . ." But GATT, an institution of the major Western economies, has thus far failed to find viable solutions to the problems confronting the Africans. The representatives of Reagan and Thatcher once more ensured that the document contains generalised expressions but not concrete measures.

Two Approaches

The UN debate brought out in sharp relief two diametrically opposed views on the causes of Africa's plight and the means of overcoming it. A majority of the industrialised capitalist countries blamed wrong economic policies and natural calamities. They called for a halt to centralised planning, curtailment of the public sector, shelving of social welfare programmes and an open door entry for the Transnational Corporations (TNC's). In attacking the public sector and centralised planning they were calling into question the right of the African countries to control and dispose of their own resources.

These and other offensive views were forcefully expressed by US Secretary of State George Schultz and British Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe. In an impudent and overbearing manner typical of colonial masters they churned out a series of paternalistic homilies extolling the virtues of private enterprise. Schultz in particular launched into a diatribe about utilising individual initiatives and talents and how the USA had successfully harnessed these "greatest resources". Naturally he ignores the millions and millions of Americans who live at or below the poverty datum line and whose "individual initiative and talents" are swallowed up in their endeavours merely to survive.

The representatives of the USA, UK, France, West Germany and Japan used open and subtle threats to compel the Africans to accept compromise formulas which absolved colonialism, neo-colonialism and imperialism of their responsibility for the present crisis and consequently their duty to help redress it. They want Africa to adopt the failed economic prescriptions of Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl, and to tie our continent even closer to their apron strings so that they may intensify the exploitation of our labour, mineral and raw material resources, and openly intervene in the internal affairs of our countries.

For the socialist world and many of the developing countries the root cause of Africa's plight is to be found in the historic colonial legacy and its links with present day neo-colonial and imperialist plunder. The socialist countries fully supported the demand of the Non-Aligned Movement for a new International Economic Order.

A representative of Poland, Noworyta, speaking on behalf of the delegations of Byelorussia, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, GDR, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Ukraine and the USSR, appreciated the desire of the African countries to implement the OAU programme of economic recovery. To accept this requires, they said, the "central role of the state in overall administration of the economy and in ensuring a balanced development of its basic spheres." The socialist countries argued that a comprehensive approach to socio-economic development should include "the promotion of industrialisation as the basis for an independent national economy."

In exposing the weaknesses of the UN document Noworyta pointed out that within the document the framework for economic development is separate from the continent's social problems, and it "has not analysed with sufficient clarity the external factors hindering African development, nor does it provide for the working out of recommendations for effectively overcoming the continent's unequal status in the world economy as a result of imperialist and neo-colonialist exploitation." Due to these and other drawbacks the UN special session failed to give adequate consideration to the problem of Africa's medium-term and long-term dvelopment.

The socialist countries are vehemently opposed to any attempts from any quarters to use the present crisis as a pretext for interfering in the domestic and foreign policies of the African states. They pledged their support for the implementation of the OAU programme, but stressed that the real solution lies in the elimination of the legacy of colonialism and neo-colonialism and linking the needs of Africa with the struggle for disarmament and world peace.

This position was clearly stated by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachov when he met Jose Eduardo dos Santos of Angola a few weeks before the UN special session. Gorbachov said:

> "We are convinced that it is vital to put an end to neo-colonialist plunder. The crisis besetting African countries cannot be resolved with new injections of financial aid. It is no cure for this disease. Radical measures are needed to uproot its deep-seated causes, inherited from colonialism and bred by neo-colonialism. These measures

> must be closely related to the solution of the problem of disarmament. Every step on the road to disarmament would not only ensure stronger security for all but release resources for overcoming backwardness, inter alia in African countries, of course. Our slogan is 'Disarmament for Development'."

Who can deny that a reduction of the obscene and wasteful expenditure on weapons of mass destruction would release resources which could be used to assist the African countries in implementing their Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986/1990?

The UN session was a small but significant step forward. However, it was the intransigence and bullying tactics of the major imperialist powers that prevented the UN session from adopting concrete measures that would have made a vital contribution to resolving some of the most acute problems facing our continent.

ANGOLA: WHO IS FOR AND WHO IS AGAINST PEACE?

Eleven years after independence Angola remains a prime target of racist imperialist aggression. During the period since 1975 South Africa has used its vast array of destructive weapons to sabotage oil installations, diamond mines, docks, the transport infrastructure, bridges and even waterholes for cattle. Pretoria can only sustain these acts of destabilisation due to the support of US imperialism. For its part Angola has been able to counter the counter-revolutionary offensive thanks in part to the support of the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries.

In the first six months of this year Angolan territory has been occupied and its air space systematically violated. In early April the Angolan air force shot down a South African Hercules E-130 transport plane which was part of a team conducting reconnaissance and also dropping supplies to the Unita bandits.

On May 16th, within hours of the barbaric South African raids on Gaborone, Harare and Lusaka, a 600-man racist task force equipped with 30 armoured cars and 2 Puma helicopters invaded the Cunene Province. This invasion was followed by a large scale attack on the Angolan army FAPLA near Xangongo about 40 miles inside Angola with helicopters, tanks, heavy artillery and ground forces. In the fighting that ensued more than 50 FAPLA soldiers were killed. Two weeks later commando units of the racist occupation army attacked unarmed merchant ships of the Soviet Union and

Cuba which were unloading goods in the port of Namibe. The Soviet ship was damaged and the Cuban vessel sunk. In addition two empty oil storage tanks were destroyed and one damaged by Israeli manufactured Gabriel II missiles. Later that month the Unita terrorists with the back-up of the racists attacked provincial government buildings in the enclave of Cabinda. Faced with a determined FAPLA the bandits retreated leaving behind weapons and ammuntion including time bombs, pistols with silencers, machine guns and 16mm mortars, made in South Africa and the USA.

Let us recall that in March 1985 Angola repulsed an attempt to sabotage the Malongo oil installation in Cabinda. Captain Wynand du Toit of the South African army who was captured admitted that under the guise of Unita he had previously carried out similar sabotage missions.

Pretoria acts with contempt for international law and in defiance of the United Nations because it is confident that it has the support of the Reagan administration. This year alone US imperialism has given millions of dollars to Unita, supplied it with sophisticated surface-to-air Stinger missiles and encouraged it to use the territory of Zaire for attacking Angola.

The US Senate has also approved the supply of Stinger missiles to the counter-revolutionaries in Afghanistan. In condemning this hostile act the Minister of Civil Aviation of Afghanistan pointed out that the Stinger missiles could be used to paralyse civil air traffic in violation of all the codes of safety adopted by international organisations.

The supply of Stinger missiles to the counter-revolutionaries in Angola and Afghanistan shows that Reagan is lying when he claims that civilian aircraft and passengers are sacrosant. Washington is the major patron of the bandits in Angola, Afghanistan and Nicaragua who commit the most horrific crimes. Can there be any doubt that the Reagan administration which unjustly attacked Libya in the name of fighting "state terrorism" is the main sponsor of international terrorism?

Solidarity

Angola which offers proletarian internationalist solidarity to SWAPO and the ANC, receives the support of all progressive humanity. Over the past decade the relations between Angola and the Soviet Union have been strengthened. This was reflected in the friendly official visit paid to the Soviet Union by Jose Eduardo dos Santos, President of Angola and chairman of MPLA Workers' Party, in May of this year.

During his visit comrade dos Santos held talks with leading Soviet Party and government figures including comrade Gorbachov. At an official dinner

Gorbachov in welcoming his guest emphasised the urgent need to eliminate even the very threat of a nuclear war from international politics. He condemned the US attack on Libya as "the worst manifestation of terrorism — state terrorism — where a stronger power claims the right to 'lynch' countries that are not to his liking." In relation to Angola Gorbachov said that the Soviet Union "will continue to stand firmly and unswervingly by our commitments under the clauses of the Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation." In expressing satisfaction with the "fruitful, progressive development of Soviet-Angolan relations" the Soviet leader was confident that "these relations have a good future."

At the end of the visit the two sides signed a document on inter-party relations for the years 1986-1988 and issued a statement on the situation in Southern Africa. In the statement both sides expressed their solidarity with the fighting people of Namibia and South Africa led by SWAPO and the ANC and resolutely rejected the attempts of Pretoria and Washington to link the independence of Namibia with the withdrawal of the Cuban internationalists from Angola. They insisted that, "Angola's sovereignty and independence, its independent home and foreign policy cannot be a bargaining chip."

The statement points out that the crimes of the South African racists are made possible by Reagan's policy of "constructive engagement" and the support of the other imperialist powers. The two sides called on all these countries to withdraw their support and instead join in international actions including the imposition of mandatory sanctions in accordance with chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter.

Pretoria's acts of aggression against the front-line states and its fierce repression of protests inside the country show that racist South Africa is a threat to world peace.

Reagan and Thatcher stubbornly refuse to recognise this obvious fact and continue to veto Security Council resolutions calling for the imposition of mandatory sanctions on apartheid South Africa. The socialist countries, on the other hand, repeatedly emphasise that there can be no peace in our region as long as the inhuman system of apartheid survives.

LIBERIA: ONCE MORE A US COLONY?

At the last "elections" held in October 1985 General Doe was defeated but clung to power by force and political chicanery. Presiding over a corrupt and disintegrating regime Doe has now taken the fatal step of pawning Liberia to his foreign masters.

In May this year Doe pleaded with the World Bank, IMF and the EEC to take Liberia into receivership. He invited these agencies to take over and run the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank of Liberia. According to Doe they are to be responsible for all expenditure control, tax collection and foreign exchange measures. Doe wants exporters to pay his government 25 per cent of their export proceeds. But even some of the leading agencies are wary since the Doe regime is riddled with corruption and there is no control over government expenditure.

The US State Department, however, has no qualms. In all probability these sinister and dangerous moves have been forced upon Doe by Chester Crocker, Reagan's hit-man for Africa. The State Department has also been cultivating Robert Tubman, a member of the Tubman clan which mismanaged Liberia for so many years.

After the so-called elections the State Department pressured Doe to appoint Robert Tubman as Minister of Finance. Initially Doe baulked at this and made Tubman a deputy governor of the National Bank. But Doe is under an obligation to the USA not least because he squandered nearly 400 million dollars in US aid between 1980 and 1985. Consequently a few months after the rebuff Tubman was appointed Finance Minister. The journal *West Africa*, characterising these manoeuvres as "a grand conspiracy", wrote:

> "Chester Crocker, Robert Tubman, and Samuel Doe have now conspired to place Liberia in receivership once more. This time, however, the stakes seem higher. For Crocker, it is the latest manifestation of 'constructive engagement'; for Tubman, it is an effort at restoring the Tubman dynasty; for Doe, it is the frantic flailing of a man who cannot understand and appreciate the historical futility of his efforts at self-preservation". (26 May, 1986).

Liberia is to be one of the major recipients of US aid in 1987. Reagan has called for a 70 per cent increase in military aid for Doe thus attempting to tie the Liberian armed forces to the US apron strings.

It is clear that the US State Department is manoeuvering to replace Doe with Tubman. As is their wont the imperialists act as if the people of the country are irrelevent. In asserting their dominance and colonial-type control over Liberia the US paymasters are naturally willing to substitute one puppet for another. But Tubman or Doe, the progressive forces in Liberia will continue to fight to free their country from foreign interference and control.

AFRICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD REVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

by John Hoffman

The world revolutionary process can be defined as a process of emancipation — a process in which people both individually and collectively seek to take control of their own destinies.

But where does Africa stand in relation to this process of emancipation? Africa, we are told by the pundits, is 'in crisis': she suffers from famine, drought, poverty, backwardness and increasing indebtedness. But it would be far more accurate to say not that Africa is in crisis, but that Africa is in chains. Africa still chafes under the chains of colonialism and neo-colonialism and at the root of Africa's problems lies its links with the world capitalist economy.

It is a familiar and depressing story. The tractor which was bought for 3 tons of bananas in 1960 cost 11 tons of bananas in 1970: what would it cost today? Food production has sharply declined; indebtedness to the Western world is soaring and when we recall that the rate of profit for foreign investors in Africa (and Asia) is nearly five times greater than it is in the developed world, it is not difficult to see that 'aid' to Africa involves a massive transfer of resources, to be sure, but it is a transfer out of Africa and into the capitalist coffers of the West.

Africa not only suffers grievously from neo-colonialism: in the south, she is tormented by that peculiarly obnoxious and concentrated form of colonialist oppression which the world knows as apartheid. If Africa cries out for emancipation, what then are its prospects?

Two contentions need to be tackled if Africa's relationship to the world revolutionary process can be properly understood. The first is the argument that Africa's backwardness stands as an insuperable obstacle to progress and that she must wait at the back of the historical queue until other more developed countries have thrown off their chains. The second is the argument that Africa is a continent unique unto herself: she has her own traditions and heritage — an 'authentic' indigenous socialism — which makes the experience and analysis of other continents irrelevant. Africa, in other words, is not part of any world process, revolutionary or otherwise. Africa stands alone.

It is this latter contention which I wish to tackle first.

The Exceptionalist Case

It is true that in many respects Africa is unique and that its communal traditions can play an important role in the struggle for emancipation. But the fact remains that these communal traditions can only be identified, analysed and understood if we relate them to humanity's experience as a whole.

Take the remarkable Kung-San peoples, for example, who were all but exterminated by the Dutch settlers at the Cape. They were a hunting and gathering people who lived in participatory and egalitarian communities regulating their affairs without the need for a state. Yet their way of life, from which much can still be learnt today, is only intelligible to us because the Sans resemble early communist societies in other parts of the world. Nor should we forget that some pre-colonial African societies had moved beyond a 'hunting and gathering stage' and had established semi-feudal kingdoms with their own indigenous hierarchies and serfdoms.

The exceptionalists not only mystify Africa's heritage but in so doing they make it difficult to grasp the relevance of colonialism to Africa's development. As Agostinho Neto has reminded us[1], the great capitals of Europe have been built on the blood, sweat and labour of Africa's millions: colonialism and the slave trade demonstrated with a vengeance that Africa was, and still remains, part of a world-wide system of exploitation and exchange. Any position which plays down Africa's integration into this system, tends to play down the shattering impact of colonialism upon the continent and treats neo-colonialism as a reality which can be ignored.

While it might be conceded that the exceptionalist case played a more positive role in the early days of the anti-colonial movement in emphasising the importance of Africa's own heritage, the argument has always been an incoherent one and is today increasingly used to orient Africa towards a capitalist path. The exceptionalist case is in reality an exploiter's charter. The advocates of exceptionalism have been the most willing to reach accommodation with apartheid South Africa and sanction the use of imperialist troops on African soil. As the beneficiaries of a class-divided society whose existence they deny, the exceptionalists articulate the aspirations of a neo-colonialist bourgeoisie which is also supposed not to exist.

Africa's communal traditions *are* important but they must be analysed rather than idealised: they need to be consciously utilised to integrate Africa into the world revolutionary process. Otherwise they merely serve to keep Africa weak and vulnerable to the increasingly injurious impact of the capitalist world market.

The Backwardness Thesis

Emancipation is clearly a process. Although most of Africa has won political independence — a vital first step — emancipation can only be carried forward into social and economic realms, translating formal rights into real powers, if working class leadership for the struggle is secured. But if, as in most of Africa, the working classs is weak, fragmented and politically inexperienced, how is this leadership possible?

It is this problem which gives rise to what I want to call the 'backwardness thesis' — the argument that because Africa is undeveloped, it must stand at the back of the historical queue for emancipation. If it cannot fall back upon its own unique traditions as the exceptionalists argue, then it must wait for the proletariat of the advanced capitalist countries to lead the way.

While exceptionalist arguments appeal to home-grown exploiters and their backers, the backwardness thesis appeals to a section of European socialists whose own experience and traditions incline them to fatalism, defeatism and not a little 'Europeanist' arrogance in their view of the third world. The truth is that the proponents of the backwardness thesis radically misunderstand the mechanics of the revolutionary process and the relationship in particular between emancipation and backwardness.

Exploitation is a process which necessarily engenders backwardness: broadly speaking, we can say that the more backward a people, the more exploitation they suffer. This fact explains why Marx and Engels paid particular attention to the role of revolutionary movements in countries where capitalism was weak and undeveloped. Why were these countries seen as crucial?

In countries where capitalism is relatively backward, exploitation in the factories and in the countryside, aggravated by semi-feudal institutions and an autocratic state, is particularly harsh and savage. The national bourgeoisie is usually weak and ineffective and the popular movement has to look elsewhere for leadership in the fight even to secure limited political rights. If we add to this a colonial experience in which whole peoples — nations as well as individuals — experience the dehumanising impact of exploitation, then we can make sense of what otherwise appears as a paradox, namely the fact that peasants, small traders, intellectuals and a professional middle strata in backward countries can have a passion for revolutionary change which may be wholly or at least partially absent from the working class in a 'successful' or 'advanced' capitalist society.

Backwardness is not therefore an insuperable barrier to emancipation and this point is underscored if we remember that the colonial relationship is itself a product of capitalism. The struggle for national liberation cannot but be a struggle in part against capitalist rule. National liberation movements are much more predisposed to take a socially based view of emancipation than that which characterised the position of classic Western liberals like John Locke who, it should not be forgotten, identified as one of humanity's natural rights the right to own people as property — slaves of African origin.

The more protracted, bitter and violent the struggle for liberation, the more profound the understanding of the process of emancipation is likely to be. It is not difficult to see why. The more intense the struggle, the more obvious it becomes that Western capitalism, though ostensibly opposed to old fashioned colonialism, is even more opposed to a real liberation movement which could jeopardise investments and lucrative patterns of trade. The struggle for national liberation is, in other words,part and parcel of a struggle between opposing social systems. Reagan's policy of 'constructive engagement' with apartheid and the massive involvement of the multi-nationals in the apartheid economy demonstrate that imperialism has taken sides. So must Africa.

Nevertheless the backwardness thesis still leaves us with a problem. Even if we accept that the struggle for national liberation in a colonial context generates an anti-capitalist orientation, how is the process of emancipation to be sustained if the working class does not play a leading role? The bourgeoisie may be weak and undeveloped, but so too is the working class. The fact remains that 80% of Africa is peasant and the leadership of the national liberation movements has generally been in the hands of people of the intermediate strata — intellectuals, small traders, office workers and professionals — and the impetus for development after independence comes additionally from civil servants and the military. These sections may not be exploiters but they are still a *petty* bourgeoisie. How can we expect them to understand and press for the kind of thorough-going emancipation associated with the historical mission of the proletariat?

Revolutionary Democracy and Scientific Socialism

The leadership of national liberation movements has usually been characterised as revolutionary democratic in character, but where do revolutionary democrats stand in relationship to working class movements and their commitment to scientific socialism?

A crucial insight into this problem is provided by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto* where it is argued that as class struggle intensifies, a portion of bourgeois ideologists come over to the side of the proletariat — those ideologists 'who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole'. This comment captures the all important point that the revolutionary process has a momentum through which radicals from non-proletarian strata come increasingly to see for themselves that real social change can only be sustained if leaderships involve and identify themselves with the standpoint of the proletariat.

Indeed, it is worth remembering that Marx and Engels were initially revolutionary democrats who became convinced that social emancipation requires the leadership of the class with 'radical chains' — a development which has been repeated many times since. Revolutionaries like Fidel Castro, Samora Machel and Amilcar Cabral, to name just a few,began as revolutionary democrats and moved to a position of scientific socialism. The working class, even when its numbers are small, acquires a position of great qualitative importance as revolutionary democrats begin to see that the struggle for emancipation cannot be sustained unless the working class itself is involved and its ideological standpoint embraced.

This, it must be stressed, is much more than a question of revolutionary *ideas*: national democratic movements must be transformed into vanguard parties of a Marxist kind if the emancipation process is to be continuously deepened and this organisational change is only possible if increasing numbers of workers are brought into positions of political leadership.

As President dos Santos stressed at the MPLA's 2nd Congress last December[2], problems of accountability, disorganisation and discipline can only be tackled if there is greater involvement by industrial and agricultural workers — those whose life-style and background, whose immersion in what Marx called the 'stern and steeling school of labour' inclines them to systematic, sober and participatory organisational rhythms. A more developed working class involvement and ethos helps to curb some of the classical deficiencies of revolutionary democracy — its moralism and elitism and its tendency to vacillate in difficult situations, substituting rhetoric for realism. Only through the increasing influence of organised labour in party and government can the daunting problems of post-independence societies be tackled.

There is also a third factor which helps to ease the transition from national democratic to more explicitly scientific socialist perspectives. This is the help and inspiration which Africa derives from the existing socialist world. Assistance from the socialist countries not only makes it possible for national democratic governments to begin to limit the negative impact of the world capitalist economy on their own development, but it brings them into direct contact with socialist ideas and experience, so that they can tackle their own problems with greater confidence and independence, with an optimistic outlook for the future based on sober realism.

For it is clear that social emancipation can only be sustained by an economy which is able to provide full employment, finance adequate healthcare and housing, education and other social services and develop the kind of infrastructure which makes balanced growth possible. Socialism requires a developed economic and social basis and this is why for many African countries, starting from a relatively low level of development, the struggle for socialism will be long and complex, involving perhaps a whole historical epoch — a protracted process of transition — before the necessary prerequirements can be created for a developed socialist society. But this is the point. Given a consistently revolutionary leadership, this is a struggle which can start now.

The World Revolutionary Process and its Proletarian Core

It is revealing that when Marx and Engels characterise the proletarian movement as the self-conscious movement of the immense majority in the interests of the immense majority, they do *not* say that the proletarian movement is composed of workers alone. Working class involvement is important, certainly, but what makes a movement proletarian is the character of its leadership and its political direction.

A movement of the immense majority can be a movement of peasants, small traders, intellectuals, professionals, civil servants and army officers. But to be a consistent force for revolution, it requires a proletarian *core:* a decisive working class nucleus, a strategic powerhouse able to radiate unity of purpose, tactical realism, organisational stability, an unwavering commitment to revolutionary change and above all, a respect for and reliance upon, the popular masses.

The great Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, captures the character of this proletarian core brilliantly in his workers' catechism when he writes:

> We, the workers, are of one clan
> And hence we should not allow ourselves
> To be divided by religion, colour or tribe
> . . . in the organisation of the workers
> Lies our strength
> For those who are organised never lose their way.[3]

In the ever intensifying struggle against apartheid we encounter the concentration of colonialism and neo-colonialism, institutionalised racism and national oppression, imperialism, exploitation and multi-national capitalism in their most virulent and explosive form. It is no coincidence that in such a situation a national liberation movement, headed by the ANC, is proud to acknowledge the role of communists in its ranks — to see two separate organisations, each with their own identity yet agreed on fundamental strategy and tactics, playing a unifying and in Oliver Tambo's words, 'a mutually reinforcing role'.[4] The very intensity of the struggle makes it imperative that revolutionary democrats and scientific socialists should stand as comrades in arms, in every sense of the term, in the battle against apartheid.

What sustains this historic struggle for a liberated South Africa is the growing involvement of the working class. The formation of COSATU last year has seen South Africa's largest ever federation of organised labour build upon, from within the heart of the country, the experience and perspectives of the exiled SACTU, so that the impact of the working class upon the liberation struggle can now be even more systematically and self-consciously directed than ever before. It is not surprising that when the ANC, COSATU and SACTU met in Lusaka last March, they declared their 'common understanding that victory must embrace more than formal democracy'. The fight against apartheid is a fight for a 'society free from the chains of poverty, racism and exploitation' and this, it goes without saying, requires 'the restructuring of the present economy'.

It is in statements like these that we come face to face with what I have called the proletarian core of the world revolutionary process: the understanding that popular movements can only deepen their power and impact as they take on an increasingly proletarian character. It is only the working class which will consistently and unremittingly identify liberation with what the British Chartists of the 19th century called 'knife and fork questions'[5] — with what the great People's Charter of our own time, the South African Freedom Charter, declared are human rights of a broad social and economic, as well as of a political kind.

Grasping this insight into the proletarian core of the world revolutionary process is crucial for the emancipation of the people of South Africa, the continent of Africa itself and indeed for humankind as a whole.

NOTES

This is a shortened version of a lecture given by the author to 'Africa-in-Struggle', a week of action for Africa Day, which took place in Harare from May 19th-25th, 1986. It was organised by Grassroots Books and Star Press, in conjunction with the Commissariat of ZANU (PF).

1. *The African Communist*, 3rd Quarter, 1977, p.53.
2. *AC*, 2nd Quarter, 1986, p.60.
3. *AC*, 1st Quarter, 1983, p.50.
4. *AC*, 4th Quarter, 1981, p.23.
5. Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Volume 4, p.519.

On the 200th Anniversary of his birth

LET US CELEBRATE THE TRIUMPHS OF MOSHOESHOE 1

By Pandula

This year marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Moshoeshoe I. It is very easy when looking at a man of such titanic stature to lapse into uncritical idealising. This would not be a fitting tribute. To give genuine recognition to Moshoeshoe it is neither necessary nor desirable to approve of everything he did, for that would include actions which he himself recognised as mistakes, for he was wise and self-critical enough to see his mistakes and correct them. Fortunately the list of great deeds by this man, the range and quality of his personal talents and above all his sharpness of vision — these make a formidable array.

Moshoeshoe is a legendary figure, and the number of legends about him is such that they could not all belong to one man. The truth, however, about legends is that they have a basis in fact.

As a young man he showed an enviable wealth of personal talent which included cultural knowledge, ability to sing praises (lithoko), and amazing personal bravery and fighting powers. As a more mature man he was to show in addition powers of wisdom, generosity, incorruptibility and a flexible military creativity. (Is there, perhaps, a reincarnation of this figure in our ranks at present?)

As we observe this bicentenary of his birth we shall, in addition to those personal qualities, remember with the greatest admiration his political vision which in some ways adumbrated the kind of view which, some sixty years later, was to lead to the formation of the ANC. A message which he sent to Sekonyela shows an awareness of the need for black unity:

> "We are both black and of one nation — it is now our duty and interest to sympathise with each other — to lay aside all hostile feeling, and henceforth to be united, and only keep a jealous eye on enemies of another colour." (Quoted in *Moshoeshoe, Chief of the Sotho,* by Peter Sanders, Heinemann, London, 1975.)

Lepoqo, son of Mokhachane, was not born king, but was by birth only a fairly minor chief. He rose to become king by a combination of the qualities which we have mentioned, particularly useful against the ravages of *Lifaqane* which were mass national upheavals. The change of name from Lepoqo to Moshoeshoe happened while he was a young man, soon after initiation into manhood. After a battle during which he captured many cattle from a rival chief, Lepoqo praised himself with a verse which included the following lines:

Ke Moshoeshoe! Ke Moshoeshoe!
Moshoashoaila oa Kali.
Lebeola lebenteng RaMonaheng litelu.

Translated this is:

I am Moshoeshoe, the Shaver!
The shaver of Kali.
The blade which shaved the beard of Ramonaheng.

From then on he became Moshoeshoe, a name affirming his fighting prowess.

The period after the death of Chief Mohlomi (1816), whom he greatly respected, to the early thirties was bedevilled by wars, famine, mass migrations of nations, and marauding hordes called *Lifaqane.* The most important skills were those of survival. Moshoeshoe's diplomatic and military skills were responsible especially for the survival of his people, the Mokoteli, and helped ensure their ascendancy among the Sotho. The many enemies they had to face, with varying fighting styles, tested his fighting skills. He was shown to possess a highly flexible mind with an ability to change his style to face Zulu, Ndebele, Thembu, Korana, Boer and some Sotho enemies.

Missionary Influence

His relationships with the missionaries were particularly interesting, for this was an area where he made good use of the missionaries' knowledge of things about which he and his people knew little. The price was the spread of

Christianity. He was attracted to many aspects of this new religion, though it presented him with problems when he was made to divorce some of his wives. On the whole, however, he was impressed by the missionaries' avowal of high moral values and peace. Above all, he valued the knowledge which the missionaries had of the ways of the whites. He felt that they would be useful to him in his confrontations with the Boers and in his discussions with the British.

One of the areas in which he found the missionaries most helpful was as interpreters. They were interpreters in the literal sense of translating for him from Sotho to English and vice versa. They were also useful to him in interpreting the ways of the British and Afrikaners. On the land question, for example, many chiefs were duped into selling land, a practice which was totally alien to them. Indeed, some transactions which have gone down in history as sales of land must be regarded as highly dubious considering the language and cultural barriers between purchaser and seller. For example, it is said that the missionaries "purchased the area of Morija and Moshoeshoe received in exchange a complete suit of European clothing." (Sanders p.49.)

This kind of transaction was alien to the Sotho and it is doubtful if Moshoeshoe's understanding of the contract was the same as that of the missionaries. Moshoeshoe had already given the missionaries the right to live and work at any place of their own choosing. (Sanders op.cit. p.48.) The "complete suit of European clothing" must have seemed to him more in the nature of *peho,* a token of gratitude to the king, and certainly not thought of as a price. It would appear that the missionaries later had an inkling that this might have been Moshoeshoe's view of the relationship.

Other instances of misunderstanding had to do with the Wesleyan Conference. Those attending must have thought that they were dealing with a fool, for they were able to acquire huge amounts of land for "a mere trifle". (Sanders op. cit. p.66.) The king's view on these "sales" has the stamp of authority. To sell the land

> ". . . would be on my part introducing an unprecedented practice. The people I govern look upon me as being entrusted with the preservation of their country, and I could not forfeit or cede my right to any part of it without being considered as having robbed the community." (Sanders op.cit. p.67.)

As he came to understand the ways of the Europeans Moshoeshoe became more cautious in his dealings with them and would refuse *peho,* especially from the Afrikaners.

> "From their first appearance till now I have never ceased to warn them that I viewed them as mere passers by, and although I did not refuse them temporary hospitality I could never allow them any right to property. I have rented no place to them. And

> I have abstained from receiving any remuneration for the use they have had of posts of the land, lest such remuneration might be considered or construed into a purchase." (Sanders op.cit. p.80.)

Sanders quotes Sekhonyana, Moshoeshoe's son, as saying, in support of the above, that Moshoeshoe had lent the farmers the land "like a chair is given to a stranger to sit upon in a house, but the chair does not then become the property of the stranger." (Sanders op.cit. p.80.)

Unfortunately Moshoeshoe was fighting a losing battle. Many chiefs were selling land, left, right and centre — sometimes land that was not even theirs. There is an instance in 1842 when Afrikaner officials resorted to subterfuge in order to trick Ntsane, chief of the Molibeli, into selling them land around Thaba Tsoeu. Moshoeshoe, sensing something wrong, tried to protect Ntsane, but the lure of filthy lucre was far too strong for Ntsane.

The Land Question

One of the demands of the Freedom Charter is on the land question. The land was acquired in dubious ways from chiefs who had no legitimate right to sell it. In some intances they were not even aware of the nature of the transactions. In other words, they may have known what they were doing, but they did not know what they were recorded as having done. The demand in the Freedom Charter for a redistribution of land is based on natural justice. It is also in line with the African customs which Moshoeshoe was fighting to uphold. Natural justice demands that when we dismantle apartheid and give political power and civil rights back to the people, we shall also give them their wealth and their land. It is also a principle in African custom that land belonged not to one person, be he king or chief, but to the nation as a whole. The demand therefore for the land to be "shared among those who work it" is an expression, in the twentieth century terms of the Freedom Charter, of a far older principle.

Moshoeshoe's military genius is as legendary as many of his other qualities. He was a flexible strategist, always adapting to new conditions and adopting new methods. His use of horses, guns and battle axes is an example. So was his choice of Thaba Bosiu as his seat. So also was the particular use which he made of the custom of *mafisa,* a form of generosity by the victor towards the defeated which placed them effectively in a position of dependency on the victor. His main aim, however, was not simply to gather dependants around him, but to establish peace which he frequently termed "the mother of nations".

He did not adopt either the centralised political structure or the military formations which were the hallmark of Shaka. The differences between the two men are fascinating and we could write a whole article on that aspect alone. On this occasion we are concentrating on Moshoeshoe.

One of many occasions when his military genius was put to use was in a battle against the Ngwane forces of Matiwane in 1828. Moshoeshoe arranged his forces for an initial clash on open territory which he planned to follow with a strategic retreat on to different terrain. In the event his forces won in the first clash. Another event much remembered in Sotho lore is the way in which Mzilikazi's Ndebele were routed at Thabo Bosiu. On this occasion Moshoeshoe used a combination of tactics which included utilising the shape of the mountain and supplementing his armoury with stones and rocks which were in abundance. The simplicity of the plan was pure genius. As the defeated army was moving away, Moshoeshoe sent them cattle — a gift which could only be seen as unforced generosity of a very unusual kind. Moshoeshoe's aim was to establish peace — his version of the Pax Romana, but with a more pacific element. He wanted those whom he had defeated to understand that they were face to face with a superior moral power. His own experience did not provide him with any models for this kind of thing, but he was groping for a kind of "commonwealth" of peaceful nations.

Military genius that he was, Moshoeshoe was painfully aware of the technological power of the gun in the hands of the Afrikaner. They had proved superior to his rivals and he never sought a confrontation with them. He also distrusted them deeply in spite of a certain admiration of their ability.

Relations with British

His concern for the security of his people was his main reason for seeking to establish a relationship with the British whose position was always ambivalent. The missionaries who went to see the Lieutenant-Governor at Grahamstown on behalf of Moshoeshoe put it like this:

> "The tribe of the Basutos , surrounded on all sides by the emigrant farmers whose equivocal attitude causes it lively anxiety, places its confidence in the paternal care of the colonial government." (Sanders p.74.)

Moshoeshoe clearly wished to establish with the British a relationship based on mutual trust which would be a guarantee of peace, but the British were at best equivocal on their relationship with him, often treating him extremely badly. For most of his life he had regarded the task of the king as one of securing life and property, the property being cattle. He was shocked when he discovered the territoral nature of imperialism (though he would not have used that particular word in the context). "Europeans, he told Casalis, did not steal cattle, but 'entire countries'." (Sanders p.177). The enormity of this observation may not strike many of us as significant, but we must see this as a truly horrific discovery by him. His discovery that whites "bought" land had been a recent event; the stealing of "entire countries" was not only a bigger shock but one revealing a nature wholly new and alien.

At this point he began to see the struggles by other blacks, including the Xhosa, in a totally new light. Sanders has found strong evidence of this view:

> "In 1846 . . . he had looked upon (the Xhosa) as fools to attack his ally, and had placed his regiments at the Governor's disposal. Now his eyes had been opened, and he saw them as fellow Africans, struggling like himself against white encroachment." (Sanders p.177.)

We said that we would not be uncritical in our assessment of Moshoeshoe. His initial attitude to the Xhosa is something which he came to see as a mistake. So were many of his relations with other people, including the missionaries whom he later came to see as less unworldly than he had initially thought. In his dealings with the British he often allowed himself to be bullied into taking decisions without consulting his people.

Moshoeshoe's greatness is not that he did not make mistakes. What made him great was his ability to learn from his and other's mistakes. He suffered many defeats and humiliations, but he soon regrouped to fight better. When defeat came it was not unexpected and he always ensured that it was never deep enough to affect him seriously.

Another clue to his greatness is the complexity of his nature. Born a minor chief, he died a king. As a young man he was a proven brave and ruthless fighter, but as a mature man he was an indefatigable peacemonger who said: "I am Moshoeshoe and my sister is Peace." He could be generous to the extent of sending cattle to the defeated Ndebele, yet he was feared by those who knew him as a man whose anger knew few limits. He was often humble when talking to the Afrikaners, but he fought fiercely when they attacked him. These are not contradictions, but rather complementary sides of a multi-talented personality.

We have on the whole looked at the pleasanter aspects of Moshoeshoe's life. We have not dwelt on some of the painful aspects such as the unedifying spectacle of the missionaries in the last year of Moshoeshoe's life brawling over who had the right to baptize the dying man. He saw painfully the need to keep separate the affairs of state from the religious. In his conversion, as much as in the rest of his adulthood, he was wise enough to keep the two spheres separate, even though in a state of tension.

BOOK REVIEWS

100 YEARS OF MAY DAY

May Day — A Short History of the International Workers' Holiday 1886-1986, by Philip S. Foner. (International Publishers, New York, 184pp. Price, Cloth 14 dollars, paper 6.95 dollars.)

With the United States Administration today stridently proclaiming itself the boss of the world and main bastion of international capitalism, neo-colonialism and counter-revolution, many people are apt to overlook the fact that the US is a cockpit of class conflict and that the US working class has a long and honourable revolutionary tradition. Indeed the United States was born of revolution against the British monarchy, and the US Declaration of Independence contains a resounding justification of the right of an oppressed people to resort to violence in their efforts to rid themselves of unendurable tyranny. The struggle of the US working class has also seen the establishment of two historical landmarks — International Workers' Day on May 1st and International Women's Day on March 8. Both days trace their origins to demonstrations in the US — the former in 1886 and the latter in 1908, when women workers in the needle trades poured on to the streets of New York in support of their demands for a better life.

The history of May Day is outlined in this new book by Philip S. Foner, professor emeritus at Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, Communist and historian with a string of books on the history of the labour movement to his credit. Workers in the United States a century ago were very much at the mercy of their employers. There was hardly any industrial or social legislation on the statute books, and jobs were at a premium, with up to 60 per cent of the work force unemployed in slump periods. A survey in the 1880s showed that the average working day was over ten hours, including Saturdays. In many industries workers were on the job 12 to 15 hours a day, including holidays and Sundays the year round. It was not unusual for labourers to work 24 hours at a stretch when shift changes were made.

Today the advance guard of the organised working class in the capitalist countries is agitating for a 30-hour week.

In America during the 19th Century there had been several campaigns for shorter hours, and some contingents of the working class had won reductions. By the 1880s there was a consensus for 8 hours and the demands of the workers were heard on all sides. May 1st, 1886, was fixed as the day on which there was to be a general strike in support of the 8-hour day. It was a burning issue. A Wisconsin labour official later wrote:

"The agitation permeated our entire social atmosphere. Skilled and unskilled labourers formed unions or assemblies . . . It was the topic of conversation in the shops, on the street, at the family table, at the bar, in the counting room, and the subject of numerous able sermons from the pulpit".

On May 1st, 1886, there were strikes in all the main centres involving up to 500,000 workers. The most eventful demonstration took place in Chicago, with about 90,000 workers marching through the streets with music and flags. After the day was over, many thousands more workers, inspired by its success, joined in the agitation. There were more demonstrations, strikes, clashes with scabs. The authorities must have thought the revolution was at hand. At one demonstration on May 3, police fired into the crowd, killing four and injuring many more. The following day a protest demonstration was called, there was more police shooting. From somewhere a bomb was thrown, killing one policeman and injuring 70 others. In the following days and weeks, six more policemen died from wounds received. In a recent study a labour historian proves that the majority of police victims were hit by bullets fired by their fellow officers — "a consequence," Foner comments, "of the indiscriminate firing upon unarmed workers carried out by the undisciplined police force after the explosion".

Martial law was declared, hundreds of "agitators" arrested. Many of the strike leaders and campaigners were anarcho-syndicalists, and they and their organisations were the main target of attack by the authorities. Eight leaders were put on trial, and addressing the jury the prosecutor said:

"Law is on trial. Anarchy is on trial. These men have been selected, picked out by the grand jury and indicted because they are the leaders. They are no more guilty than those thousands who follow them. Gentlemen of the jury: convict these men,make examples of them, hang them and you save our intitutions, our society".

Seven of the eight accused were sentenced to death, the eighth got 15 years. One of the remaining seven died in jail, two were reprieved. Four were hanged on November 11, 1887.

All eight accused had been convicted of murder, but it was not even alleged against them that they had any hand in the killing of the police officers, merely that by their speeches they had incited the unknown bomb-thrower, and were thus guilty of conspiracy. On the 50th anniversary of the 1886 events, a 1936 study of the Chicago trial concluded that the eight accused were not guilty of murder on the basis of the evidence produced in court.

"A biased jury, a prejudiced judge, perjured evidence, an extraordinary and indefensible theory of conspiracy, and the temper of Chicago led to the conviction. The evidence never proved their guilt . . . No valid defence can be made for the verdict."

The hysteria and the chauvinism which lead to judicial murder in defence of capitalism have been a feature of US society during the last 100 years. After the Chicago eight came the witch-hunts which led to the victimisation of Mooney and Debs, Sacco and Vanzetti, the Rosenbergs and many others. Foner's book shows how the history of May Day is inextricably bound up with the history of the class struggle as the workers organise and fight for the replacement of one social system by another, capitalism by socialism.

And May Day is not just a US affair. In the socialist countries May Day is an official holiday in honour of the workers. Foner shows how the fight to make May Day a workers' holiday has been waged in many countries, including South Africa, which has provided the author with many illustrations for his story. The first May Day demonstration in South Africa took place in Johannesburg in 1895, and on May 1st this year the South African working class shut down all industry as they struck another mighty blow in the course of their struggle for national liberation. We in South Africa still have to win rights which are taken for granted in many other countries, but the 100 years of May Day prove that workers' unity and determination are the key to victory.

Z.N.

In Township Tonight!: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre by David Coplan (London, Longman, 1985).

I met David Coplan in South Africa when he interviewed me in connection with our theatre group, Workshop '71, and I remember being cheesed off by his referring to me as 'a white liberal'. I considered myself a Marxist and I wasn't amused by the blanket generalizations about whites so typical of the Black Consciousness militants of that time — and now.

The racial limitations of his remark, softened, remain the parameters of his book. But within those parameters, Coplan has achieved wonders.

I knew even at that time that he was one of the few whites who actually moved around much in the 'black' world. Dorkay House and its extensions were his home from home. Right, he was doing research, is the obvious cynicism. But what was significant was that he believed the musical culture of the urban oppressed to be worthy of research and his genuine admiration for it gives his research a humility which is one of the most valuable aspects of his book.

He listened to what those who knew the culture because they had made it, told him — rare for white researchers in the African experience, and it is the voices of the forgotten maestros of South African music that speak through the pages of *In Township Tonight!* And what a wealth of fascinating detail they reveal!

All of us who came to consciousness in the late 1960s or 70s have heard of *ingomabusuku, abaqhafi, marabi, thula ndivile, famo, indunduma, tsabatsaba, isicatamiya* etc. Names mostly from a vanished past. Coplan penetrates into the earlier birth of the urban culture, tracing the story with an amazing depth of detail from the first 'tickey-draai' in Kimberley via *marabi* in the backyards of Doornfontein and Vrededorp to the *famo* of Seteketekeng in Newclare, to *tsabatsaba* in Sophiatown and finally the more modern familiar forms like *mbhaqanga, malombo* and soul in Alexandra Township and Soweto.

On the way his musical expertise, both theoretical and practical (he played percussion with Philip Tabane and Gabriel Thobejane in Malombo) illuminates the work of the early composers of Christian music based on traditional melody, tone and harmony, such as Ntsikana Gaba and John

Knox Bokwe, that of the Queenstown 'jazz organist' Boet Gashe, the movingly gifted and versatile career of Reuben Caluza, the hymns of Shembe and much else.

In addition to the extremely valuable attention it pays to proletarian and lumpen culture, Coplan's book includes a number of chapters on that of the 'elite'. In the early period, Coplan is very much aware of the complex contradictions governing the relationship of the black petit-bourgeois artists and those of the working class. His study is not a Marxist one and this leads to a certain lack of focus in the chapters dealing with more recent performance. He does however show a welcome openness to the social and political functions of art and from time to time reminds us of some half-forgotten political uses of performance in the context of the ongoing struggle for freedom. He notes the use made by the I.C.U. and its performance groups of song, especially *ingomabusuku*, for purposes of mobilization, the protest songs of the 1950s, such as 'Azikhwelwa', 'Vukani Mawethu', 'Asibadali' and 'Meadowlands', the socialist-oriented theatre of the African National Theatre in the early 1940s and plays such as Lucas Nkosi's *Now I Know* and G. Radebe's *The Rude Criminal.*

He also makes a welcome link between the forces of liberation now and the past, such as Amandla's recording of J.P. Mohapeloa's 'U ea kae?'. He is however curiously silent on the wealth of new musical material created by our people during the struggles of 1976 and then in the liberation movements. The same applies generally to the long tradition of political songs associated with specific nationalist movements within the country.

It is his chapters on contemporary theatre that leave most to be desired. He continues to provide much new material but he is obviously not as at home with the genre as he is with musical performance. There is also a problem of a certain lack of critical distance and an adequate ideological perspective. A passage on the failure of many recent music festivals indicates the problem:

> "The ultimate problem, of course, is apartheid, which makes an autonomous, self-supporting, culturally relevant black music world impossible and creates social conditions in which frustration and violence in black urban communities cannot be excluded from major performance occasions." (p.192)

The contradiction here is plain to see. 'Apartheid' is blamed and yet only an apartheid ideology would consider 'an autonomous, self-supporting, black music world' to be desirable in the first place. Our major liberation movement, with the support of the vast majority of our people, is fighting for the *abolition* of 'the colour bar in cultural life', to open 'all the cultural treasures of mankind... to all'. This is the only authentic alternative to apartheid in the arts.

The consequences of this contradiction are to be seen in that section of the book where Coplan turns his attention to recent theatre activity. There emerges a reluctance to analyse any popular black work critically and in particular to apply the awareness of class and social function present in the earlier chapters. A confused and inconsistent analysis results. For instance he is himself insensitive to the ideological limitations, pointed out by Lewis Nkosi (see *A.C.*, No.88 — 'The Theatre of Athol Fugard') of Fugard's early play *The Blood Knot.* He considers it 'perhaps his finest play' (p.206). He does however air some pertinent criticism by others of Fugard's plays generally:

> "Other African critics complain that characters representing the African 'common man' in Fugard's plays like Zach in *The Blood Knot*, Willie in *Master Harold* and even Robert in *Sizwe* are too shuffling, unintelligent, and unconscious; not proud enough or admirable enough to represent black sufferings, values, and aspirations." (p.215)

Kente he rightly admires with the necessary reservations. Sam Mhangwane, the black commercial playwright who produced a play on the need for birth control among blacks at the height of the Soweto massacres, demonstrates, we are told, 'a concern for new social values, patterns of integration and communal identity in the townships'! (p.213) But Bertha Egnos, the white profiteer of *Ipi Tombi* fame, surely a bird of Sam Mhangwane's feather, is on the other hand soundly castigated — albeit deservedly.

Flawed as the book's theoretical framework may be, its wealth of detailed research and the essential humility and sympathy of its author make for a timely tribute to a hundred years of forgotten and unvalued performers who, thread by thread, spun the fabric of the lives and culture of millions of our people.

R.K.

THE SHAPE OF REVOLUTIONS TO COME

A Distant Clap of Thunder. Pamphlet published by the South African Communist Party on the fortieth anniversary of the African miners' strike of 1946. Price £1.

The goldminers' strike of 1946 was perhaps the most conspicuous act of mass resistance by the African people during the lifetime of those who were infants when the Zulus took up arms in 1906 and were old men when Soweto erupted. Very little has hitherto been published about that historic event. At the time, the government and the bourgeois information media deliberately told as little of the story as they could. South Africa's only left-wing newspaper, *The Guardian,* valiantly strove to reveal the truth but, with a staff of exactly one journalist in its Johannesburg office, its coverage could not possibly be complete. Until now, no historian has thought it worthwhile to. piece together the available information.

It is therefore most appropriate that an authoritative account should now be published by the South African Communist Party. The author — our own Toussaint — is better qualified than anyone else now alive to tell the story (he modestly omits to mention his own part in it, but that part was an active and honourable one).

The pamphlet begins with the foundation of the African Mine Workers' Union in 1941. It records the highly effective way in which the union presented the miners' case for a wage increase to the Lansdowne Commission, appointed in 1943 to enquire into conditions on the gold mines. The union's demand was for a wage of ten shillings (about R15 in today's money) per day. The Commission recommended an increase falling far short of that figure, but even its recommendations were too much for the arrogant and avaricious mineowners. With the full agreement of the government of the day, they offered a derisory increase of five pence (about 62 cents in today's money) to workers whose wage had remained unchanged throughout the years of wartime inflation. A strike became inevitable.

The dramatic story of the strike is told with many quotations from contemporary sources. None of these sources gives a complete picture. Neither the total number of workers who took part in the strike, nor the total number who were killed and injured was ever published. Five dead and "about nine hundred" injured was the government estimate, while the mineworkers themselves said that "at least a million man hours" had been lost.

The pamphlet goes on to analyse the profound significance of the miners' strike as a stage in the evolution of political consciousness among the South African people. Obviously, the trade union movement had many lessons to learn, but that was only part of the picture. The Natives Representative Council adjourned in protest against the police repression of the strike and it never met again. Thus the strike marked the end of the bogus representative institutions which formed part of the Hertzog government's attempt to "settle the native question" before the war. The Communist Party found first its Johannesburg District Committee and later its Central Executive Committee faced with criminal charges by a government hoping to blame the whole thing on "agitators". There were also police raids on numerous other Communist Party, trade union and Congress offices. These repressive actions marked the end of the period of legality for the South African left and ushered in the period during which underground work gradually came to predominate over legal work in the life of the liberation movement.

Above all, in Toussaint's own words:

> "The strike brought together in a working partnership the three main forces of the national movement — the ANC, the black trade unions and the Communist Party . . . That new partnership has grown steadily, uninterrupted from that time on. It has become the stable foundation stone for the united alliance which today dominates the political scene in our country, and which heads the entire nationwide struggle for liberation."

It is an inspiring story, well told and should be required reading for every South African.

P.M.

30 YEARS INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLITICS OF LIBERATION

Side by Side, the autobiography of Helen Joseph. (Zed Books Ltd, London 1986. Price £5.95.)

Helen Joseph's autobiography is the story of more than 30 years involvement in the liberation struggle. While it is a very personal account of her evolution from apolitical British immigrant to seasoned campaigner, it is told in the context of the history of people's resistance to the apartheid regime. Central to the book is the struggle of the Federation of South African Women of which the author was a leader.

Banned four times, gaoled four times, 81-year-old Helen Joseph remains totally committed to her cause. The book reveals many years of persecution including the harrowing death threats which became a way of life. The author found strength not just in the example set by the oppressed people of South Africa but also in a journey back to her faith. She recounts her return to the community of the Anglican church in her later years.

The reader is struck by the frank self-assessment readily offered by Helen Joseph. Although not a natural public speaker, she has always agreed to address meetings when she has been free to do so. Her book shows how close she felt to the NUSAS students who urged her to speak on many occasions. In the mid-1970s Pietermaritzburg students asked Helen Joseph to defend socialism against capitalism in a public debate. She writes:

> "I agreed but very hesitantly, because I am no ideologue. I know where I stand, unequivocably alongside the Freedom Charter,but I am not quite sure where this places me in the politico-economic spectrum." (p.199)

The author's work in liberation politics has obviously enriched every aspect of her life. She has worked alongside people from a wide spectrum of backgrounds far removed from her own sheltered upbringing. Many of those she counts among her friends were members of the Communist Party. The book exposes the type of anti-communism rife in South Africa. Helen Joseph is at pains to point out her resistance to it. She writes of her Communist colleagues:

> "That they held some political theories differing from mine was totally irrelevant to our friendship and to our loyalty to the liberation struggle." (p.158)

While much of the history covered in this book is familiar to anti-apartheid activists, this autobiography will draw wider sections of people closer to the struggle. Helen Joseph is a symbol of the just stand against apartheid. Her autobiography reveals why. She explains to the readers:

> "I have already said how often I am — and still am — asked why I don't leave South Africa. Part of the answer lies in my utter hatred of the security and apartheid laws and practices of South Africa. It is my belief that by staying in South Africa, having suffered some of the persecutions inflicted by the government, by being prepared to accept whatever lies in the future, I can make my stand clear." (p.156)

R.N.

THE UNANSWERABLE CASE FOR SANCTIONS

Mission to South Africa, the Commonwealth Report. The Findings of the Commonwealth Eminent Persons Group on Southern Africa. A Penguin Special. Price £2.50.

In 141 pages of cool logic the case for sanctions against South Africa as a means of speeding the end of apartheid is presented with crushing force. This official report, written in straightforward English by seven persons of unquestionable eminence who cannot by any stretch of imagination be called communists or agitators, provides an excellent guide to South Africa's current crisis. Terse, trenchant and totally convincing, it provides an authoritative answer to the sophistries of Reagan, Thatcher and co. and a useful introduction for first-time students of South Africa. Highly recommended.

Z.N.

A PENGUIN POT-BOILER

Apartheid in Crisis, edited by Mark A. Uhlig. (Penguin Books. Price £3.95.)

This hastily compiled collection of bits and pieces contains very little that is new, most of the contributions by various hands having appeared elsewhere, either as articles or speeches. The book is sub-titled "Voices in South Africa Today", and the names listed on the cover are Andries Treurnicht, P.W. Botha, Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee, Desmond Tutu, Chester Crocker, Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, Nicholas Bethell "and others". An interesting but arbitrary collection. What is Chester Crocker doing there?, one wonders. Evidently the editor had second thoughts about him, because no contribution by Crocker appears in the book. After all, Crocker is not a voice in South Africa today, is he? Or is he?

The list of names on the cover is misleading in another sense too, because the major contributions to this book have been written by other, less well-known authors, whose contributions are of uneven quality. What can one say, for example, about the article "Why Constructive Engagement Failed" by Sanford J. Ungar, a U.S. journalist, and Peter Vale, a South African academic, which recommends that among "measures that might hurt the pride and prestige of the white South African government without inflicting undue economic damage on black South Africans" might be included the appointment by the US Administration of a black ambassador to South Africa who "should attend the funerals of blacks killed by the police, political trials and church services in black communities"?

When it is borne in mind that the voice of the ANC is restricted to 6 pages out of 334 (Zinzi Mandela's message from her father and a short broadcast over Radio Freedom) it will be realised that this book, whatever other merits it may have (and they are not easily discernible), can hardly claim to be representative.

M.P.

* * *

To forget the political for the economic fight would mean a digression from the most important principle of international social-democracy (communism) . . . Every economic fight of necessity turns into a political fight, and social-democracy must indissolubly combine the economic with the political fight into a united class struggle of the proletariat. The first and chief aim of such a fight must be the conquest of political rights, the conquest of political freedom . . . The final aim of the class struggle of the proletariat is the seizure of power and the construction of a socialist society.

Lenin, *Our Programme,* 1899

* * *

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE LIBERATION STRUGGLE

From Abu Hassan, London

Dear Editor,

Reply to "The place of the Church in our liberation struggle" by Thoko Mdlalose, *African Communist*, No. 104, First Quarter 1986.

It was with great interest that I read this thought-provoking article which nevertheless was, with respect, somewhat inadequate. The title, first of all, is not appropriate as it sets the liberation movement apart from the Church. There is no such thing as "our liberation struggle", but a liberation struggle whose components are many and varied. The substance of the article is at variance with the title. A title such as "The role of the Church in the liberation struggle" would have been more suitable. (The title was coined by *The African Communist* not the author. — Ed.)

The writer correctly points out that the making of flippant statements about religion, without explanation, can be counter-productive and gives the example of Marx's oft-quoted remark that "religion is the opium of the people".

This brought to mind a real example from the days when Josiah Gumede was president of the ANC. On his return from the Soviet Union in 1928 he proclaimed: "I have seen the New Jerusalem." At that time communists were brandishing statements to the effect that all ministers of religion were "tools of the dominant race and class"; that they existed for the "sole purpose of perpetuating and accentuating the slavery under which Africans groan today"; that they were "the upholders of imperialism". An early member of the Communist Party, Edwin Mofutsanyana, stated that black workers were being doped by "skokiaan-branded religion". Gumede was not helped by these attacks and in 1930 he was replaced as ANC chairman by Seme.

The party's anti-religious tirades did not increase its attractiveness to the black workers. Many Africans accepted Christianity in the naive belief that by so doing their abject poverty would be alleviated and therefore they did not go along with the wholesale condemnation of Christianity as such. Nevertheless, they were sceptical of the white (master's) religion. Dissatisfied with the established churches, thousands of believers broke away and formed independent Zion and Ethiopian churches which rejected the New Testament; a consequence was violent clashes with the state.

Central to this breakaway was undoubtedly the Land Act of 1913 which deprived the Africans of their right to the land. The history of these Christians and their churches is a milestone in the history of African nationalism.

Way of Life

Christianity is not merely a concept for Africans; it is a way of life for millions of them and permeates their customs, traditions, ceremonies of birth, death and marriage, and is reflected in their music and in their moral, social and political conduct. This explains why the ANC has a Religious Department.

Many Africans have been educated in missionary institutions and the liberation movement has a long line of people who benefited from such establishments, e.g. the Reverends Dube, Rubusana and Calata, Chief Albert Lutuli, A.P. Mda, Anton Lembede and O.R. Tambo. They passed through such famous institutions as Fort Hare, Lovedale and St Peter's.

Of course, when Christianity arrived in our country it was not as a liberatory force, but primarily as the doctrinaire arm of the dominant power whose purpose was to complete the overall subjugation of the African people.

From the days of the ANC's formation, all its gatherings would have prayers and would sing the national anthem *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika (God Save Africa)*. Even today South African communists sing this song addressed to a heavenly being. The days of protest up to the 1960s were sometimes referred to as "a day of mourning" or "a day of prayer". The young people of Soweto departed from that in 1976 by coining the slogan "Don't mourn. Mobilise!"

Comrade Mdlalose rightly attributes the moral conduct of the people to the influence of the Church. Much of our own conduct can be traced to our religious backgrounds and this is demonstrated by the behaviour of a number of our leaders. J.B. Marks, for example, often carried a Bible with him on his travels which he used as a source of reference and which he valued for its literary qualities. Moses Kotane had a strict Lutheran upbringing; this explains why he sampled tobacco and alcohol only during his adult life in Berlin. Then there was the request of Y.M. Dadoo, chairman of the SACP, for a Muslim burial, not because he was religious in any overt way, which he wasn't, but because he was a people's leader who had been brought up in the culture and traditions of a community that was part of the oppressed majority of the country.

While it is true that religion itself will not cure the social ills of the world precisely because it is not secular and can therefore not be scientific, there are numerous instances of the Church attempting to confront the issues of the day, giving rise to fierce debates, excommunications, breakaways and cases of priests going over to the liberation forces. This has happened in countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and recently the Philippines (though in the case of the latter only to overthrow the Marcos dictatorship while retaining all US imperialist links). In our country priests are prominent in the UDF.

Out of this clash of viewpoints in the Church have emerged new branches of social science: Liberation Theology and Black Theology.

In the case of Poland the manifestation of religion in political affairs has taken a much more challenging form due to a series of blunders by the party in handling religious questions. The Vatican consequently saw an opportunity to stage a *coup de grace* with the election of a Polish cardinal as its pontiff.

There now appears to be a more flexible approach to the Church in socialist cultures, resulting in cordial and friendly relations between Church and State. Church dignitaries can be seen at international gatherings and Muslims from socialist countries make the pilgrimage (Haj) to Mecca. In 1987 the Christian Church in the Soviet Union will celebrate, with official encouragement, its 1000th anniversary.

The Majority Are Churchgoers

Comrade Mdlalose rightly points out: "We need to realise that, in our country, the majority of those who will participate in the final overthrow of apartheid are churchgoers." Precisely: that's what makes it imperative that we be sensitive and tactful in our dealings with religious people and their institutions. To help us comprehend the numbers and organisations we are talking about, we should consider the following data:

1. **Africans' Religion**	**Members**
Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk	1,103,560
Black Independent Churches (Zion, Ethiopian)	4,954,000
Lutheran	698,400
Anglican	797,040
Presbyterian	360,620
Methodist	11,554,280
Roman Catholic	1,676,680
Apostolic Faith Mission	125,680
Congregational	208,380
Other Christian Churches	1,066,180
Other Non-Christian Churches	101,700
No religion/Objection to state religion	4,277,240
TOTAL	26,923,760

2. **Coloureds' Religion**	**Members**
Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk	678,380
Black Independent Churches	118,340
Lutheran	95,640
Anglican	351,480
Methodist	140,120
Congregational	170,020
Apostolic Faith Mission	406,480
Roman Catholic	264,820
Other Christian Churches	406,480
Islam	163,700
Other Non-Christian Churches	30,360
No Religion/Objection to state religion	144,580
TOTAL	2,970,400

3. Asians' Religion	**Members**
Afrikaans Churches	3,940
Hindu	512,360
Lutheran	1,140
Anglican	8,900
Methodist	4,320
Presbyterian	1,900
Roman Catholic	21,160
Full Gospel	22,840
Other Christian Churches	38,300
Islam	154,300
Other Non-Christian Churches	12,220
No religion/Objection to state religion	39,960
TOTAL	821,340

Source: 1980 Census, published in Government Year Book 1984.

It may strike one as strange that so many of the oppressed people actually belong to the oppressor's church. While this confirms the power of the Church, it does not imply that all blacks accept the state religion. There have been revolts within the Coloured Dutch Reformed Church because of the parent body's support for apartheid, resulting in a breakaway. White DRC ministers, too, have challenged the authorities' interpretation of Christianity, notably the Reverend Beyers Naude and, more recently, Nico Smit.

There have also been various attempts within the church to improve the employment conditions of African ministers who suffer the effects of racism which permeates the religious administrations. Their cause was first taken up by the Federation of African Ministers which was for many years led by that most distinguished individual, the Reverend James A. Calata, one-time Secretary-General of the ANC, composer of many Congress songs and a treason trialist in 1956.

The election of African, Coloured and Indian bishops, moderators and officials to the higher echelons of the Church administration is no accident. There is no doubt that the years of work put in by the Federation of African Ministers and the impact of the Defiance Campaign placed the spotlight on the conduct of the churches.

A Long Way

The non-DRC churches had been practising racial discrimination, had kept a low profile on the questions of political equality and had generally avoided confrontation with the state. But this quiescent attitude did not prevent their schools from being swallowed up under the Bantu Education Act of 1954. The churches were allowed to give only religious instruction.

Today, the churches have come a long way. They act in defiance of the state, so much so that their ministers, nuns and functionaries get roughed up by the police and thrown into prison. Churches are providing legal and medical aid to opponents of the regime. They provide social services for the victims of forced removals. They help with education and bring succour in a variety of other ways. Some have opened their white-run schools to all ethnic groups; these are unfortunately private and expensive and therefore cater for only a handful of blacks.

Finally, there is the Kairos Declaration, probably the most courageous and daring document ever to come from the churches on the question of apartheid. The South African Institute of Christian Churches, the Muslim Judicial Council, and the World Conference on Religion and Peace, South African Chapter — they all deserve credit for their efforts against apartheid. Internationally the Churches are also playing a valuable role in the struggle against apartheid.

But whilst recognising the valuable role they play, we must be alert to the forces who want to steer (and if possible hijack) the liberation movement in the direction of *exploitation without apartheid.* Moves of this kind are being taken every day by every known agency of high finance, academe, the media, labour organisations, as well as through diplomatic channels and the churches. There is no reason to believe that other, less known agencies, are not pulling in this direction too.

It was therefore timely of *The African Communist* (No. 101 2nd Quarter 1985) to carry a critical article on the anti-communist sentiments of Bishop (now Archibishop) Desmond Tutu. He had obviously been playing to the Reagan/Thatcher gallery and his statements, when seen in the light of Western strategy, have the effect of trying to split the ANC/SACP unity.

Hinduism and Islam

Noticeably, Comrade Mdlalose only discussed the role of the Christian Church and wholly excluded consideration of Hinduism and Islam. This was an embarrassing omission in view of today's estimate of 1,312,360 people in our country of Indian and Indonesian descent. Maulana Faried Essak estimates that there are something like 800,000 Muslims and he rejects the label "Cape Malays". The Maulana claims his people are Muslims of South

Africa; they have been present in the country at least as long as the Dutch with whom they came from Java, making an enduring cultural contribution, not least to the Afrikaner diet. Muslim organisations are among the most active affiliates of the UDF in the Western Cape. Their activists wear the check scarves of the PLO at demonstrations against Botha's police and soldiers. The Cape Muslims are largely working class and have a distinctly South African outlook.

The Muslims, like the Hindus and Christians of Indian origin, have produced some outstanding leaders, such as M.K. Gandhi, Drs Abdul Rahman, Yusuf Dadoo and "Monty" Naicker and Nana Sita.

While making a critical assessment of the positions of the church, one should distinguish between the role of individual clergy as opposed to that of the organisation as a whole. And the record shows a string of names of churchpeople who have played a part in the liberation struggle who deserve commendation, among them: Reverends Dube, Rubusana, D.C. Thompson, S. Pixley, J.A. Calata, Z.R. Mahabane, A. Blaxall, Michael Scott, Bishop Trevor Huddleston, Rev. Frank Chikane, Beyers Naude, Sister Bernard and Nico Smit.

Abu Hassan

MARXISM-LENINISM AND THE PARTY OF A NEW TYPE

From Mafosi Shombela, Lusaka

Dear Editor,

As the struggle for national liberation reaches its climax the active involvement of the South African Communist Party in the revolutionary process assumes even greater significance. Our class enemy will do its utmost to distort the history, programme, policy, tactics and strategy of our Party. The ultra-leftists on the other hand will continue to engage in wild speculation about the nature and character of our struggle and of the national liberation alliance headed by the ANC. But we know that our country needs a Communist Party as much as drought stricken areas need rain. In the fierce and uncompromising battles to come, the Party has to perform varied and multi-dimensional tasks.

The Party and the Trade Unions

Both the Party and the trade unions are working-class organisations but their place and role in relation to the immediate and long-term struggle of the workers is not and cannot be the same. A trade union is a mass organisation of the working class. It represents the interests of the workers in a particular trade by regulating the "fair" sale of the labour power of the workers to the owners of the means of production. The trade unions essentially struggle for an immediate improvement in the working and living conditions of their members and for economic reforms. Trade unions cannot be all-embracing since conditions of work differ from one trade to another. Trade unionist consciousness basically arises spontaneously at the point of production. "Trade unionist politics of the working class", Lenin said, "is precisely bourgeois politics of the working class". Under the conditions of tyranny as found in racist South Africa, "pure" trade union struggles are brutally suppressed by both the employers and the state. In these circumstances every trade union struggle assumes a political character. But even then *class* political consciousness does not arise and develop spontaneously.

The trade union movement has a vital and indispensable role to play in the struggle against capitalism for socialism. Trade unions are a school of organisation, struggle and communism of the entire working class. Communists throughout the world actively participate in the trade union movement and in the day to day struggles for basic economic reforms.

The communist party is the most advanced and organised contingent of the most revolutionary class. It should be the vanguard of the working class since not every worker can be a member of the party but only the most advanced workers who can lead the whole class to socialism. In this sense the qualitative composition of the party guarantees its combative capacity. Unlike the trade unions a communist party is guided by the science of Marxism-Leninism and the organisational principles of democratic centralism. Lenin always emphasised:

> "Social-Democracy (i.e. communists) leads the struggle of the working class, not only for better terms for the sale of labour power, but for the abolition of the social system that compels the propertyless to sell themselves to the rich. Social-Democracy represents the working class, not in its relation to a given group of employers alone, but in its relation to all classes of modern society and to the state as an organised political force. Hence, it follows that not only must Social-Democrats

> not confine themselves exclusively to the economic struggle, but that they must not allow the organisation of economic exposures to become the predominant part of their activities. We must take up actively the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness." (*Collected Works* Vol. 5, p.400).

The Party and the Mass Movement

In practice the communists support every revolutionary movement, and are actively involved in raising and solving every general democratic question and issue. Communist Parties do not seek to hijack the leadership of the national liberation movement and the mass democratic organisations, but to strengthen and guide them. Communists always respect the independence and sovereignty of these movements and organisations. As our late comrade Mabhida put it, "Our party's relationship with the ANC is based on mutual trust, reciprocity, comradeship in battle and a common strategy for national liberation."

Those members of the SACP who hold high positions and exercise immense responsibilities in the ANC, SACTU and Umkhonto We Sizwe have earned their posts through their active contributions and not as our enemies claim through some subversive conspiratorial schemes. Communists win the confidence of the people because they are always in the forefront of the struggle. We are inspired by the heroic deeds of the Soviet Red Army during the Second World War. The words "if I die consider me a communist" were often found in the diaries of the fallen soldiers. Communists were found in the forefront of the units and formations storming enemy positions, and about a third of the central committe of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were amongst the soldiers in the thick of the battles.

The position and attitude of the SACP in relation to this question were clearly spelt out in the political report "The way forward from Soweto" adopted by the central committee in 1977. The report points out:

> "The struggle of the black workers cannot be separated from the wider struggle against racist oppression. The indivisible link which exists between class and national oppression in our country explains the need for a strong Communist Party and a well-organised trade union movement as part of the liberation alliance headed by the African National Congress . . . this alliance is not only in the interests of the working class but also of all patriots; any attempts to weaken it will damage the prospects for revolutionary change in South Africa. Our Party has no immediate political aims separate from the aims of the national liberation movement headed by the ANC."

The cadre policy of the Party is of the greatest significance. Without a correct cadre policy the Party cannot win the war against the bourgeoisie. Cadre policy must be aimed at producing cadres who will be politically solid at all times and under all conditions. In order to explain events, counter bourgeois schemes and take the offensive, a cadre must study and creatively apply the theory of Marxism-Leninism, the experience of other revolutionary struggles and always be partisan to the world proletariat. The Party should evolve a correct policy of recruitment so that its composition reflects a proletarian character. It must be sure that those who join its ranks do so not only because of its popularity and achievements, but because they understand its strategy and tactics, and even under conditions of repression, retreat and temporary defeats, champion the cause of the working class and its Party.

Marching under the black, green and gold flag of the ANC and the red banner of the SACP our people will be victorious. Victory is Certain.

§§§

The school of civil war is never lost upon nations. It is a hard school, and its complete course *necessarily* includes victories for the counter-revolution, the unbridled licence of the infuriated reactionaries, the savage reprisals of the old government against the rebels, etc. But only incurable pedants and doddering mummies can moan over the fact that the nations have entered this very painful school. For it is the one that teaches the oppressed classes how to wage civil war and how to carry the revolution to victory.

Lenin, *Inflammable Material in World Politics,* 1908

§§§

DOCUMENTS

STATEMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN COMMUNIST PARTY ON THE STATE OF EMERGENCY

The Central Committee of the South African Communist Party rejects with the utmost vigour the attempt of South African President PW Botha to justify his declaration of a state of emergency by smearing the African National Congress and the South African Communist Party. President Botha alleges that the SACP is a 'proven instrument of Moscow' and the ANC a mere 'front' for the SACP. He alleges that the affairs of the ANC are 'directed' by the SACP. He attributes the 'large-scale unrest' which is sweeping South Africa to an international communist conspiracy and denies that it stems from the failure of his regime to satisfy the needs and aspirations of the South African people.

It is true that South Africa is undergoing a revolution, but the revolt of the oppressed majority of our population flows, not from international conspiracy, but from the people's determination to rid themselves of the incubus of apartheid exploitation which is blighting their lives. President Botha says: 'We will not allow our heritage of more than 300 years to be placed needlessly on the altar of chaos and decay'. But as far as the majority of the population are concerned, they have suffered too long on the altar of chaos and decay erected by the colonists when they first arrived from Europe in 1652. Because the Botha regime denies them any effective say in government, the people are demanding its replacement by a system of democratic rule based on universal suffrage. It is Botha's refusal to accept this elementary rule of democracy, and his resort to violence and terror to defend the rule of the privileged white minority, which is the source of the death and destruction spreading throughout Southern Africa today.

In his anniversary message on January 8 this year, President OR Tambo declared:

'The Botha regime is confronted with our mass revolt. Botha knows that the masses of our people will not stand by passively while he tries out one apartheid experiment or another. We shall not abandon our forward march, allow ourselves to be diverted from our goal of one person one vote in a united South Africa, or in any way co-operate with the Botha regime in the execution of programmes aimed at the perpetuation of the apartheid system'.

The South African Communist Party is a vital part of the liberation forces headed by the African National Congress, and we fully support the ANC in its aim to unite all sections and classes among the oppressed and other truly democratic forces for a revolution to destroy white domination. This revolution, whose main content is the national liberation of the African and other black oppressed groups, will put an end to race discrimination in all its forms, restore the land and wealth of our country to the people and guarantee democracy, freedom and equality of rights and opportunities to all.

The SACP does not take orders from Moscow, nor does Moscow give them. Neither does the SACP direct the affairs of the ANC, as Botha claims. The ANC and SACP are independent organisations whose fraternal association has developed naturally over the decades since their foundation because they are joined in struggle against the same enemy, and their immediate aims as expressed in the Freedom Charter adopted at the Congress of the People in 1955 are the same. Members of the SACP who are members of the ANC are subject to ANC discipline and carry out their duties in accordance with ANC directives, just like any other member. The SACP is in no position and has no wish to 'direct' the affairs of the ANC.

What then is the role of the SACP? In our view the immediate struggle to destroy racist colonialism and to win national freedom is an essential part of the struggle for a future socialist South Africa. In this struggle the key force has always been, and will continue to be, the black working class in alliance with the masses of the landless rural people. It is this class which finds its most staunch champion in our South African Communist Party.

There are no grounds for competition or conflict between the ANC and the SACP, and President Botha is purely mischievous in his attempt to separate the communists from those whom he calls the 'genuine nationalists' in the ranks of the ANC. This is the old imperialist policy of divide and rule, and Botha is resorting to the worn out tactic of anti-communism in a futile bid to weaken the forces of liberation ranged against him. The late general secretary of the SACP, Moses Mabhida, who was also a member of the executive of the ANC, stated at a public meeting:

'Our Party's relationship with the African National Congress is based on mutual trust, reciprocity, comradeship in battle and a common struggle for national liberation. Our unity of aims and methods of struggle are a rare instance of positive alignment between the forces of class struggle and national liberation'.

On the same occasion ANC President Oliver Tambo responded:

'The relationship between the ANC and the SACP is not an accident of history, nor is it a natural and inevitable development. Our alliance is a living organism that has grown out of struggle. We have built it out of our separate and common experiences. It has been fertilised by the blood of countless heroes, many of them unnamed and unsung. It has been reinforced by a common determination to destroy the enemy and by our shared belief in the certainty of victory.

'Today the ANC and SACP have common objectives in the eradication of the oppressive and exploitative system that prevails in our country: the seizure of power and the exercise of their right to self-determination by all the people of South Africa. We share the strategic perspective of the task that lies ahead'.

On July 30th this year, the SACP will be celebrating its 65th anniversary. We do so at a time when the mounting struggle of our people on all fronts is rendering South Africa ungovernable and opening the way to the transfer of real power from the white minority to the black majority who are at present disfranchised. We make no apology for supporting this revolution. It is the only way to end the unendurable tyranny which Botha is trying to prolong indefinitely.

The SACP condemns Botha's declaration of emergency and the state terrorism with which it is being enforced. We call on all sections of the South African people not to be misled by Botha's propaganda but to unite under the leadership of the ANC in the struggle to end the barbarism of apartheid and usher in the new South Africa of freedom and democracy outlined in the Freedom Charter.

Long Live the ANC-SACP-SACTU Alliance!
Unite to Smash Apartheid!
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